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BY
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OF NEW YORK.

WITH PORTRAIT AND MAPS.

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PREFACE.

A FEW words of introduction are needed to the following unfinished story of the "Conquest of England," in which I may explain how far these pages in their present form represent the final work and intention of their writer. I cannot do this save by giving some short account of how the book was written, and the tale of the two volumes, the "Making of England" and the "Conquest of England," forms in fact but one story.

After Mr. Green had closed the fourth volume of his *History of the English People*, an apparent pause in the illness against which he had long been struggling made it seem possible that some years of life might yet lie before him. For the first time he could look forward to labour less fettered and hindered than of old by stress of weakness, in which he might gather up the fruit of past years of preparation; and with the vehement ardour of a

new hope he threw himself into schemes of work till then denied him. But he had scarcely begun to shape his plans when they were suddenly cut down. In the early spring of 1881 he was seized by a violent attack of illness, and it needed but a little time to show that there could never be any return to hope. The days that might still be left to him must henceforth be conquered day by day from death. In the extremity of ruin and defeat he found a higher fidelity and a perfect strength. The way of success was closed, the way of courageous effort still lay open. Touched with the spirit of that impassioned patriotism which animated all his powers, he believed that before he died some faithful work might yet be accomplished for those who should come after him. At the moment of his greatest bodily weakness, when fear had deepened into the conviction that he had scarcely a few weeks to live, his decision was made. The old plans for work were taken out, and from these a new scheme was rapidly drawn up in such a form that if strength lasted it might be wrought into a continuous narrative, while if life failed some finished part of it might be embodied in the earlier *History*. Thus under the shadow of death the *Making of England* was begun. During the five

summer months in which it was written that shadow never lifted. It was the opinion of his doctors that life was only prolonged from day to day throughout that time by the astonishing force of his own will, by the constancy of a resolve that had wholly set aside all personal aims. His courage took no touch of gloom or disappointment; every moment of comparative ease was given to his task; when such moments failed, hours of languor and distress were given with the same unfaltering patience. As he lay worn with sickness, in his extreme weakness unable to write a line with his own hand, he was forced for the first time to learn how to dictate; he had not even strength himself to mark the corrections on his printer's proofs, and these too were dictated by him, while the references for the volume were drawn up as books were carried one by one to his bedside, and the notes from them entered by his directions. With such sustained zeal, such eager conscientiousness was his work done, that much of it was wholly re-written five times, other parts three times; till as autumn drew on he was driven from England, and it became needful to bring the book rapidly to an end which fell short of his original scheme, and to close the last chapters with less finish and fulness of labour.

The spring of 1882 found the same frail and suffering life still left to him. But sickness had no force to quench the ardour of his spirit. Careful only to save what time might yet remain for his work he hastened to England in May, and once more all sense of weakness seemed to vanish before the joy of coming again to his own land. He had long eagerly desired to press forward to later periods of English history, in which the more varied forces at work in the national life, and the larger issues that hung on them, might give free play to his own personal sympathies. But the conditions of his life shut out the possibility of choice; and he resolutely turned again to the interrupted history of early England, to take up the tale at the period of its greatest obscurity and difficulty. In the scheme which was drawn up at this time the present volume was to have closed with the "Conquest of England" by the Danes. This plan was in fact a return to the division adopted in the *Short History of the English People*, where the conquest by Swein was looked on as the turning-point of the story, and a new period in the history of England began from the time when the English people first bowed to the yoke of foreign masters, and "kings from Denmark were succeeded by kings from Normandy, and these

by kings from Anjou." The eight chapters which bring the narrative to the Danish Conquest form the work that filled the last months of his life—a work still carried on with the same patient and enduring force, and done with that careful haste which comes of the knowledge that each month's toil may be the last. The book in this earlier form was finished and printed in the autumn, though in the pressing peril of the time the final chapters were so brief as to be scarcely more than outlines. Once more he was forced to leave England for the south. In spite of fast-increasing illness, and oppressed by heavy suffering, he there reviewed his whole work with earnest care. It seemed to him still far from his conception of what it might be; the difficulty of the subject roused in him a fresh desire to bring it home with living interest to his readers; and he believed this might be done by some added labour on his part. He resolved to make important changes in the original plan and in its order, to rewrite some portions, and to extend the history beyond the Conquest of England by the Danes to its Conquest by the Normans. The printed book was at once cancelled. With a last effort of supreme ardour and devotion, he set himself to a task which he was never to finish. A new

opening chapter was formed by drawing together the materials he possessed for a sketch of the English people at the opening of their long struggle with the invaders. But as the chapter drew towards its end his strength failed. The pages which now close it were the last words ever written by his hand—words written one morning in haste, for weakness had already drawn on so fast that when in weariness he at last laid down his pen he never again found strength even to read over the words he had set down.

But even then his work was not over. In this last extremity of weakness his mind still turned constantly to the story of his people. He would still hope, night by night, that on the coming day there might be some brief moment in which he could even yet dictate the thoughts that were shaping themselves in his mind—some larger account of the history of the English shires which was now taking form after long thinking, or some completer view of the rule of the Danish kings, or some insight of a more sure judgement and knowledge into the relations of the Norman Conquest. Many years before, listening to some light talk about the epitaphs which men might win, he had said half unconsciously, "I know what men will say of me: '*He died*

learning;'" and he made the passing word into a noble truth. "So long as he lived he strove to live worthily." By patient and laborious work, by reverence and singleness of purpose, by a long self-mastery, he had "earned diligently" his due reward in experience, knowledge, matured wisdom, a wider outlook, and a deeper insight. It was impossible for him not to know that his powers were only now coming to their full strength, and that his real work lay yet before him. "I have work to do that I *know* is good," he said when he heard he had only a few days to live. "I will try to win but one week more to write some part of it down." Another conquest than this however lay before him. It was as death drew nearer still that for the first time he said, "Now I am weary; I can work no more." Thus he laid down with uncomplaining patience the task he had taken up with unflinching courage. "God so granted it him." In those last days, as in his latest thoughts, the great love he bore his country was still as it had ever been the true inspiration of his life. The single aim that guided all his work till the end came, was the desire to quicken in others that eager sense which he himself had of how rich the inheritance of our fathers is with the promise of the future, and to

bring home to every Englishman some part of the beauty that kindled his own enthusiasm in the story, whether old or new, of the English People.

A very few words will explain the work which was left to me by my husband to do in preparing this volume for publication. In the earlier part of the book I have carried out the alterations in the order of subjects which had been decided on by him, and the first six chapters may be looked on as representing his final plan, save that some alterations would have been made in the first chapter, and some passages, such as the account of the shires, were not rewritten as he had intended. Chapters vii. and viii. were left in a wholly unfinished state, having been laid aside for consideration and revision. The materials for them had not even been drawn into any consecutive order, and I am responsible for the division and naming of these chapters, and in great part for the arrangement of the subjects.

The closing chapters (ix., x., xi.), which have been included in the book according to Mr. Green's later plan, stand on a different footing from the rest. They were written many years ago, I believe in 1875, and were then laid aside and never revised in any way. The materials for them existed partly

in a printed form, and partly in manuscript notes and papers, all alike written some years ago, and consisting merely of very rough and imperfect fragments hastily jotted down and then thrown aside. My work has been to draw these various parts together into a connected whole; and in order to carry on the unfinished tale to the Norman Conquest I have inserted some pages (pp. 567-577) from the earlier *History of the English People*. These chapters then, wholly unrevised, and dealing with the history of the eleventh century in a partial way only, and under some of its aspects, must be looked on as incomplete outlines. It had been Mr. Green's hope to enrich them by a careful study of the social history of England during this period, and an indication of the kind of work that might have been done in this direction will be found in the passage (pp. 436-466) which describes London and the trading towns. This was part of his latest work last autumn, and has been inserted into the story of the reign of Cnut at his desire.

I have judged it best to print these closing chapters without any addition of reference or notes, save the few which I have been able to draw up from his own papers. Those who have read the *Making of*

England will understand that Mr. Green was accustomed to base his views on wide and full reading, and I have been unwilling to risk any system of notes which must inevitably have seemed to rest his conclusions on a foundation narrower than that of his own thought and reading. I have felt the less difficulty in adopting this course owing to the elaborate system of references for this period which Mr. Freeman has supplied to students.

I have been specially careful throughout the book to preserve the exact words of the writer, even in dealing with the unfinished manuscript notes. The exceptions to this rule are the two paragraphs that open chapter ii., which I myself added at his own request, and the greater part of the paragraph on the custom of the feud at p. 278, which was left unfinished, and which I briefly concluded. The materials for the reign of Cnut were very imperfect, and occasionally, as in pp. 465-469, and again at the close of the chapter, I have been forced to make some expansions and alterations so as to form a consecutive and intelligible narrative. The character of Godwine on pp. 538-541 I have drawn up from some rough pencilled jottings on the margin of a paper, using the exact words I found, but shaping them into continuous sentences and a general order. The few

notes which I have added throughout the book are all marked as my own.

Two of the maps included in this volume, "England at the Peace of Wedmore," and "England under the Ealdormen," are taken from rough unrevised plans made by Mr. Green; for the rest of the maps I am myself responsible.

I cannot close without a very earnest expression of sincere gratitude to the friends who out of their generous affection for his memory have helped me in my task with constant and ready sympathy; I have especially to thank Professor Stubbs for the kindness with which he has read through my work, and given me the advantage of his counsel.

ALICE STOPFORD GREEN.

14, KENSINGTON SQUARE,
November, 1883.

P.S.—I may perhaps add that, with a view to future editions, it had been Mr. Green's intention to ask in the preface to this volume for suggestions from those who may have any local knowledge which might help to throw light on any points either in this book, or in the "Making of England." I should be glad, so far as lay in my power, to carry out his wishes in this matter.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLAND OF ECGBERHT.

PAGE

Political and social changes which followed the settlement of the English in Britain 1, 2
The gradual union of the conquering and the conquered races . 2, 3
The purely English form given to the new society . . . 3
The gradual advance of cultivation 4
Illustrated in the condition of Dorset . . . . . 5—7
The changes brought about by the introduction of Christianity . 8, 9
Its lon trife with the older religions 10, 11
Its bringing in of a new social class 12
And of a parochial organization 13, 14
Results of this new ecclesiastical system on the old organization of English life 14, 15
Influence of Christianity in the growth of pilgrimages . . 16, 17
The pilgrims' route 18
The popularity of pilgrimages 18, 19
Influence of Christianity on law 20
Character of the first written codes of law . . . . . 20—22
Influence of Christianity on early English jurisprudence . . 22
Early developement of the conception of public justice . 22—24
Origin of the judicial character of folk-moot and hundred-moot . 24, 25
The extent of the jurisdiction of the "folk" . . . . 25—27
The limitations introduced in the right of private vengeance . . 27, 28
The difficulties in enforcing the "folks' justice" 28, 29

PAGE

Causes which led to the developement of the "justice of the king" 29, 30
The king and his court 31
The king's progresses 32
Their influence on public justice 33
The results of the consolidation of Britain into the Three Kingdoms—
In the growing importance of the king 33, 34
In the decline of the ætheling 34, 35
In the elevation of the thegn 35
In the loss of power of the folk-moot 36
In the change of character of the Witenagemot . 36—38
Causes which led to the overthrow of the balance of power among the Three Kingdoms 38, 39

A.D.
758-793. Internal condition of Northumbria 40, 41
Its religious and intellectual life 41, 42
793-806. Invasion of the northmen and its results 43
The apparent strength of Mercia 44
Its real weakness 45
The superiority of Wessex derived from the character of the country 45, 46
From the varied composition of the kingdom 46
From its administrative order 47
The character of Ecgberht's supremacy 48, 49

CHAPTER II.

THE COMING OF THE WIKINGS.

829—858.

787. The first coming of the pirates 50, 51
793, 794. Their raids on Northumbria 51
The significance of their attack 52
Growth of the Scandinavian peoples 52, 53
Conditions of their life 54, 55
Character of their country 56

PAGE

Their early customs and religion 57, 58
The Wikings 58
Their mode of warfare 59
The causes of their wanderings 60, 61
The two lines of their attack on Europe 62
Settlement of the northmen in South Jutland 62
10. Their attack on the Franks 63
10. The death of Godfrid and civil war in South Jutland . . . 63, 64
34. Descent of the northmen on the Isle of Sheppey 64
120. Their descent on Ireland 65, 66
2. Thorgil's settlement in Ireland 66
Its effect in arousing the West-Welsh to arms 67
Effect of the pirate attacks in arresting the consolidation of England 68
The political relations of Wessex and Kent 69
The military resources of Wessex 69, 70
Relation of the Church to the Frankish kings 70
Peculiar position of the English bishops 71
National character of the Church 72
Effect upon the Church of the pirate invasion 72
138. Its alliance with the West-Saxon kings 73
139. Death of Ecgberht and accession of Æthelwulf 73
et seq. Extension of the Wiking settlement in Ireland 74
-845. The Wikings attack Wessex 75
145. Death of Thorgils 76
-848. The pirates leave Wessex to attack Frankland 76, 77
Importance of Kent 77, 78
138. Pirate-raids on East-Anglia and Kent 77, 78
151. Æthelwulf's victory at Aclea 79
155. Pirate settlement in the Isle of Sheppey 79
Æthelwulf's foreign policy 79, 80
153. Æthelwulf's conquest of the North-Welsh 80
154. Æthelwulf's pilgrimage to Rome 81
The Franks under Charles the Bald 81
Æthelwulf's visit to Charles the Bald, and his marriage with
356. Judith 82
356. Wessex rises against Æthelwulf 82, 83
Æthelwulf retires to Kent and is succeeded in Wessex by
357. Æthelbald 83, 84

CHAPTER III.

THE MAKING OF THE DANELAW.

858—878.

A.D.		PAGE
858.	Death of Æthelwulf	85
860.	Æthelbald dies and is succeeded by Æthelberht	85
866.	Death of Æthelberht and accession of Æthelred	86
	Extent of the Scandinavian conquests	86
	The importance of Britain to the pirates	87
	First appearance of the Danes	87, 88
	Their mode of warfare	89, 90
866.	Attack of the Danes on East-Anglia under Ivar the Boneless	90, 91
867.	Their attack on Northumbria and conquest of York	91, 92
	Ruin of the religious houses	92, 93
	Position of the Primate of York	94
868.	Æthelred drives the Danes back from Mercia	95
869.	The Danish conquest of East-Anglia under Ivar and Hubba	96
870.	Martyrdom of Eadmund of East-Anglia	96
	Mercia pays tribute to the Danes	96, 97
	The danger of Wessex	97
871.	The Danish attack on Wessex	98
849.	The birth of Ælfred	99, 100
	His childhood	99
	His position as Secundarius	101
	Political significance of his marriage	101
871.	Danish victory at Reading and encampment on Ashdown	102
	Importance of this position	102
	Æthelred's victory at Ashdown	103
871.	Ælfred becomes king	104
871.	Ælfred buys peace from the Danes	105
874.	The Danish conquest of Mercia	106
875.	Halfdene conquers Bernicia and ravages Cumbria and Strathclyde	106, 107
876.	The pirates gather their forces for a final attack on Wessex	107
876.	Guthrum's attack on the southern coast	108
877.	Ælfred recovers Exeter from the Danes	108, 109

PAGE

8. The Danes overrun Wessex 109
Ælfred falls back behind Selwood 109, 110
His refuge in Athelney 110, 111
8. Ælfred's victory at Edington 111
8. The peace of Wedmore 111
Its political consequences 112
Its effect on the European struggle with the pirates . . . 113
The importance of the Danish settlement in Britain . . . 114
876. The Danish settlement in Northumbria 115
Traces in Yorkshire of this settlement 116, 117
The northern trade 118
Traces of their settlement in York 119
Their political organization and the Trithings 120
7. The Danish settlement in Mid-Britain 121
The political organization in Mid-Britain 122
The distribution of settlers 122, 123
0. The Danish settlement in East-Anglia 123
The character of Guthrum's kingdom 124
Its English institutions, and adoption of Christianity by the Danes 125
Relations of the Danelaw with the Scandinavian realms . 126, 127
Relation of the Danelaw to Wessex 128
Real significance of the Danish settlement 129

CHAPTER IV.

ÆLFRED.

878—901.

Results of the want of political organization in the Danelaw . 130
Danger of Ælfred's position 131
884. Years of peace 131
Material and moral disorganization in Wessex . . . 132, 133
Military disorganization and weakness of the fyrd . . 133—135
Extinction of the free ceorls and growth of the thegns brought about by the war 135
Ælfred's employment of the thegns for military service . . 136
Ælfred's re-construction of the military system . . . 136, 137

A.D.		PAGE
897.	His creation of a navy	137, 138
	The reorganization of public justice	139
	The new relation of the king to justice	140, 141
	Importance of English Mercia	142
	Effect of the Danish wars on the kingly houses of Britain	143
	Ælfred becomes king of the Mercians	143, 144
	Ælfred's work in introducing a common law among the English peoples	145, 146
878-884.	The descents of the Danes on Frankland	147, 148
884.	Renewal of the Danish attack on England	148
884.	The rising of East-Anglia	149
	London under the Danes of East-Anglia	149, 150
886.	Ælfred recovers London from Guthrum	151
886.	Frith between Ælfred and Guthrum	151
	The division of Essex	151, 152
	Importance of the recovery of the Thames valley and of London	152, 153
	Upgrowth of a new national sentiment	153, 154
	The intellectual ruin brought about by the Danish wars	154, 155
	Importance of Wessex for the preservation of English civilization	156
	Ælfred's restoration of learning	156, 157
	He draws men of learning to his court	158, 159
	Ælfred's work in the formation of English literature	160, 161
	English the first prose literature of the modern world	162
	Ælfred's translations	162—164
	The Bishop's Roll of Winchester	164—166
c. 887.	Ælfred's work on the Chronicle	166, 167
	The historical importance of the Chronicle	167
890.	Death of Guthrum	168
	Growth of the Scandinavian kingdoms	168, 169
893.	Harold Fair-hair	169
	Impulse given to the pirate-raids	169, 170
893.	Renewal of the Danish attack on southern Britain	170
894.	Hasting ravages Wessex	171
898.	The rising of the Danelaw	171
	Alliance of the Danes and the Welsh	172
	Hasting's occupation of Chester	173
896, 897.	Defeat of the Danes and ending of the war	173, 174
	Ælfred's life	174, 175
	His love of strangers	176

PAGE

Foundation of Athelney 177, 178
Othere and Wulfstan 178, 179
The organization of Ælfred's court 180
The royal revenue 181, 182
Ælfred's connexion with the Continent 182, 183
His relations with the Welsh 183
His relations with Bernicia and the Scots 184
Growth of the Scot kingdom 184, 185
Death of Ælfred 186
Character of Ælfred . . . . . 186—188

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF ÆLFRED.

901—937.

01. Eadward the Elder 189, 190
Peace with the Danes 191
01. Eadward takes the title of "King of the Anglo-Saxons" . . 192
The weakness of English Mercia 193
07. Eadward fortifies Chester 194, 195
10. Outbreak of war with the Danes 195
11. Eadward's kingdom threatened from the north and from the south 196
12. Eadward's annexation of the Thames valley 196, 197
Opening of war with East-Anglia 198
Eadward's conquest of southern Essex. 198
Æthelflæd seizes the line of the Watling Street 198
The Watling Street 199, 200
13. Æthelflæd's advance on the Upper Trent 200, 201
Æthelflæd secures the line of the Avon 201, 202
, 919. Eadward's advance on the Ouse 203, 204
21. He conquers Northampton 204
, 922. He completes the conquest of East-Anglia, Essex, and the Fens 204, 205
, 918. Æthelflæd attacks the Five Boroughs 206, 207
22. Death of Æthelflæd 207
22. Eadward completes the conquest of Mid-Britain . . . 207, 209
Mercia made part of the West-Saxon kingdom 209
Political results of the conquest of the Danelaw 209

		PAGE
	The growth of commendation	209, 210
	Growth of the new territorial character of the kingship	210, 211
	Importance of the oath of allegiance	211, 212
	Danger of Eadward's position	212, 213
	His fortification of the north-west frontier	213, 214
	Relation of Wessex to Bernicia and the kingdom of the Scots	215, 216
A.D. 924.	The northern league against Eadward	216
924.	Submission of the north to Eadward	216, 217
925.	Æthelstan becomes king	217, 218
	His policy	219
925.	Submission of the northern league to Æthelstan	219, 220
	Submission of the Welsh	220, 221
926.	Æthelstan becomes King of Northumbria	221
	Fusion of Danes and Englishmen	222, 223
	Character of Æthelstan's Witenagemots	223—225
	The work of the Witenagemots for public order	225, 226
	The regulation of trade and of coinage	227, 228
	The origin of frith-gilds	228—230
	Use of the word "shire"	230, 231
	West-Saxon origin of the shire	231, 232
	The early extension of the shire-system in Wessex	232—234
	The extension of the shire over Mercia	234—236
	The extension of the shire over the Danelaw	236, 237
	The position of the shire-reeve	238
	Importance of his financial work	239
	Growth of his authority	240
	The imperial claims of Æthelstan	240, 241
	The real weakness of his empire	242
	Danger from the northmen of Ireland	242, 243
	Danger from the northmen of Gaul	243
912.	Hrolf's settlement in Gaul	243, 244
	The results of this settlement on France and on England	244, 245
	Relations of the Danelaw and Normandy	246
	The growth of the Norman duchy	247, 248
	The effect on the foreign policy of the English kings	248—250
926-930.	Æthelstan's alliances with foreign powers	249, 250
929.	The dangers which threatened William Longsword	250, 251
933	His successful alliance with the House of Paris	251

D. PAGE
34. Results of his policy seen in the renewal of the northern league against Æthelstan 252, 253
The significance of the league 253
937. The battle of Brunanburh 254, 255

CHAPTER VI.

WESSEX AND THE DANELAW.

937—955.

Political consequences of the battle of Brunanburh 256
Restoration of the Northumbrian under-kingship. 257
The weakness of the monarchy 257, 258
Political reorganization of Britain 258, 259
Position of the ealdormen 259, 260
The ealdormanries of East-Anglia and Essex 260, 261
Eric Bloody-axe 262, 263
Æthelstan sets Eric as king in Northumbria 263, 264
936. Æthelstan continues his former policy with regard to Normandy 265
936. Lewis From-over-sea king of the West-Franks 265
The support given to him by Æthelstan 266, 267
The difficulties of Lewis and failure of Æthelstan's political schemes 267, 268
940. Death of Æthelstan and accession of Eadmund 268, 269
Eadmund's policy 269, 270
941. The revolt of the Danelaw 270
The position of Wulfstan of York. 271
943. The revival of the English Danelaw 272
Growth of the Norman power 272, 273
944. Invasion of Normandy by Lewis 273
944. Reduction of the Danelaw by Eadmund 273, 274
Political relations of Eadmund with the north 274
Cumbria under the Northumbrian and West-Saxon kings . 275, 276
Norwegian settlements in Cumbria 276, 277
945. The grant of Cumbria to the Scottish kings 277, 278
Eadmund's reform of the custom of the feud 278, 279
945. Normandy freed from the West-Franks 280
946. Death of Eadmund 280

A.D.		PAGE
	The childhood and youth of Dunstan	281—284
c. 940.	He becomes a monk	284
Before 946.	He is made Abbot of Glastonbury	285
946.	Eadred becomes king	286
	Dunstan becomes counsellor to Eadred	286, 287
	Significance of Eadred's coronation	287, 288
947.	Submission of the north to Eadred	289
947, 948.	The rising of Northumbria under Eric Hiring	289, 290
948.	Eadred ravages Northumbria and Eric is driven out	291
949-952.	Olaf, Sihtric's son, rules in Northumbria	291, 292
954.	Final submission of the Danelaw	292, 293
954.	Northumbria made into an earldom	293
	Dunstan's school at Glastonbury	294, 295
955.	Æthelwold's school at Abingdon	295, 296
	Their influence on English literature	296—298
	Eadred claims imperial supremacy over the whole of Britain	298, 299
955.	Eadred's death	299, 300

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT EALDORMEN.

955—978.

	Changes in the political state of England	301, 302
	Growth of the royal power	302, 303
	Its weakness	303
	Position of the ealdormen	304
	Limitations to their power	305
955.	Accession of Eadwig	305
	Strife of the three political parties in the realm	306, 307
956.	Coronation of Eadwig	307, 308
956.	Exile of Dunstan	309
956.	Ælfhere made ealdorman of Mercia	309
	The significance of this step	310
957.	Eadwig's marriage to Ælfgifu	311
957-958.	The revolt against Eadwig and division of the kingdom	311—313
958.	Eadgar made king of the Mercians, and return of Dunstan	314
959.	Death of Eadwig and accession of Eadgar	315

PAGE

Creation of two West-Saxon ealdormanries . . . . . 315—317
Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury 317
The union of the king and the primate in the government of the realm . . . . . 317—319
Character of Eadgar 320, 321
The peace and order of his government 321, 322
Relations of England with the surrounding states . . 323, 324
Eadgar's relations to the Danelaw 325, 326
His policy towards the Danish settlers 327, 328
The industrial condition of England . . . . . 328—330
Customary rents and payment of labour 330, 331
Instances of Hurstbourn and Dyddenham 331, 332
The rural society as shown in the manor of Cranborne . 332, 333
The class of slaves 333
The protection given them by the Church 334, 335
The inland trade of the country 335
The "chapman" 336, 337
The gleeman 338
The revival of literature under Dunstan 339
His revival of historical learning 340
Historical school of Worcester 341, 342
The decline of monasticism during the Danish wars . . 342, 343
6. Its revival in middle and southern England 344, 345
The influence of the secular clergy 346
The political position of the bishops 347, 348
Eadgar and the ealdormen 348, 349
The rule of Eadgar 349, 350
3. His coronation 351
5. His death 351, 352
Disputed succession to the crown 352
'5. Eadward the Martyr 353
Growth of the contest between the nobles and the crown . . 354
'8. Murder of Eadward 355
'8. Accession of Æthelred II. 356
'8. Death of Dunstan 357, 358

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DANISH CONQUEST.

988—1016.

A.D.		PAGE
	The breaking up of the old social organization of the English	359—361
900-936.	The creation of the Danish monarchy under Gorm the Old	361—363
936-965.	Its extension under Harald Blue-tooth	363—365
965-986.	Decline of his power	365, 366
986.	His death and the accession of Swein	366
	Swein's burial-feast for Harald	367, 368
	Swein driven from Denmark becomes a wiking	369
980-991.	New pirate raids on England	369
991.	Battle of Maldon	370
	Character of Æthelred the Unrædig	371, 372
992.	Æthelred's policy towards the ealdormen	373, 374
	The dangers which threatened England	374, 375
992.	Æthelred's treaties with the Norwegian host and with Normandy	375, 376
992.	Breach of the peace between English and Norwegians	377, 378
	Olaf Tryggvason	378
994.	The union of Olaf and Swein in an attack on England	379
995.	Their league is broken up by the English policy	380, 381
997-999.	Renewed attacks of the pirates	382
	Æthelred's vigorous measures of defence	383
c. 1000.	Swein recovers his Danish kingdom	384
	Death of Olaf	385
1002.	Æthelred's alliance with the Normans	386
	Character of the Norman duchy	387
	The difficulties that threatened it from without and within	387, 388
	The policy of its dukes	389
943-996.	Condition of Normandy under Richard the Fearless	390
996-1026.	The reign of Richard the Good	391
	Importance of the English alliance with Normandy	392, 393
1002.	Strife between Æthelred and his nobles	393—394
1002.	The massacre of St. Brice's day	395, 396

A.		PAGE
03.	Swein again attacks Wessex	396
04.	And East-Anglia	397
1006.	Continued strife among the ministers of Æthelred	398
	Changes among the ealdormen	399
06.	The high reeve Eadric	399, 400
07.	Pirate raids on Wessex	400
1009.	Æthelred's internal reforms	401
	His military and naval reforms	402
	The revenue of the crown	403, 404
	National taxation	405, 406
1010.	Fresh attack of the Danes under Thurkill	406—408
12.	The Danish fleet bought off by tribute	408, 409
13.	The great invasion under Swein	410
	His conquest of England	411
	The flight of Æthelred and its results	411, 112
14.	The death of Swein	412
14.	Cnut chosen King by the Danish host	413
15.	His attack on England	413
	Political strife in England, and treachery of Eadric	414, 415
16.	Death of Æthelred and accession of Eadmund Ironside	415, 416
16.	Cnut's siege of London	416
16.	The battle of Assandun and division of England	417, 418
16.	Death of Eadmund Ironside	418

CHAPTER IX.

THE REIGN OF CNUT.

1016—1035.

16.	Cnut King of England	419
	His measures for the settlement of the realm	420
17.	His marriage with Emma	420
	The character of the Danish conquest	421, 422
	Modified by the political condition of England	422, 423
	And of Scandinavia	423
	Results of the Conquest	424
	Character of Cnut's rule	425
	His government according to national laws and custom	425, 426
20.	The rise of Godwine	427

		PAGE
	The local organization of the realm under Cnut	428
	His developement of the administrative system	429
	His institution of the Royal Chapel	430
	His maintenance of the land-tax	431
	His military system	432
	His policy towards the Church	432, 433
	His temper towards England	434
	The peace of his reign	434, 435
	His conception of government	435, 436
	Developement of English trade	436
	Growth of Oxford	437—439
	Nottingham	439
	Gloucester and Worcester	440
	The sea-ports. Chester	440—443
	Bristol	443—445
	The ports of the southern coast	445—447
	The trade of the eastern coast	447—449
	The ports of the east coast	449, 450
	York	450—452
	Early London	452
	Conditions of the English settlement there	453
	Settlement round St. Paul's	454, 455
	First settlement of the "Cheap"	456, 457
	The "East-Cheap"	458
	Growth of London under the West-Saxon rule	459, 460
	Its early municipal life	460, 461
	Extension of London to the northward	462
	Growth of its trade under Eadgar	463, 464
	Extension of eastern London	464, 465
	Importance of London under Cnut	465, 466
A.D. 1025.	Cnut's foreign policy	466
1027.	His pilgrimage to Rome	467
1028.	His conquest of Norway	468
	His policy towards the Scot kings	469
	Relations of the Scot kings with the house of Ælfred	469, 470
1031.	The political arrangement between Cnut and Malcolm	471
	Lothian becomes part of the Scottish realm	471, 472
	The danger which threatened Cnut from Normandy	472, 473
1016-1035.	State of Normandy under Robert the Devil	474

PAGE
'. Birth of William the Conqueror 475
i. He becomes Duke of Normandy 476
i. Death of Cnut 476
The break-up of his empire 477

CHAPTER X.

THE HOUSE OF GODWINE.

1035—1053.

The policy of Cnut carried on by Godwine 478, 479
Godwine's support of Harthacnut in Wessex 479
i. Harald Harefoot chosen king at Oxford 480
The division of England 480
i. The murder of the Ætheling Ælfred 482
Its results 483
). Death of Harald Harefoot 484
042. Reign of Harthacnut 484, 485
8. The Ætheling Eadward summoned to England . . . 485, 486
8. His coronation 487
The position of Godwine 487, 488
The state of Normandy under duke William 489
Character of William 490
The Norman sympathies of Eadward the Confessor . . 491, 492
The state of England at his accession 492, 493
The earldom of Northumbria . . . . . 495—497
The earldom of Mercia 497, 498
The earldom of Wessex 498, 499
5. The supremacy of Earl Godwine 499, 500
The jealousies aroused by it 501
6. The outlawry of Swein 501
7. Opposition to Godwine's policy towards Scandinavia . . 502, 503
Effect of Normandy on English politics 503
Lanfranc 504
7. Revolt against William in Normandy 505
William's victory at Val-ès-Dunes 506
His mastery of Normandy 507
Relations of the French kings to Normandy and Anjou . . 508

A.D.		PAGE
1048.	William's alliance with France against Anjou	509
	Results of William's victories on the course of events in England and on its relations with foreign states	510
	Flanders	511
	Its commercial and political importance	512
	The Empire	513
	Its relations with the new religious movement	514
	Its alliance with the Papacy	515
1049.	The rising of Lower Lorraine, Holland, and Flanders	516
	William's attempt to form an alliance with Flanders	516, 517
	Traditional policy of alliance between England and Flanders	517
	Its maintenance by Godwine	518
	His precautions against William's policy	519
1049.	The council of Rheims	519, 520
	Its political significance	520
	The Norman alliance with Flanders broken off	521
1050.	The alliance of Flanders secured for England	522
1050.	Swein restored to his English earldom	532, 524
	Strife between Eadward and Godwine about the Primacy	524
1051.	Robert of Jumièges made Archbishop of Canterbury	525
	Widening of the quarrel between Godwine and the king	526
1051.	The outbreak of open strife	527
	Siward and Leofric support the king	528
1051.	The flight and outlawry of Godwine	529
	Godwine and his sons take refuge in Flanders and Ireland	529
	Results in England of his flight	530
1051.	The visit of William the Norman	531
	Godwine's position in Flanders	532
1052.	The return of Godwine	533
	The meeting with the king at London	534
	The restoration of Godwine and his house	534, 535
	The position maintained by the king	536
	The position of Siward and Leofric	536, 537
	Godwine and the primacy	537
	Stigand replaces Robert as archbishop	538
	The character of Godwine	539—541
	Note on the growth of the royal administration	542—548

CHAPTER XI.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

1053—1071.

PAGE

The attitude of William of Normandy 549, 550
1. He carries out his scheme of alliance with Flanders . . 550, 551
The difficulties which followed his marriage with Matilda . . 552
His victory at Mortemer 553
1 Death of Godwine 554
Harold becomes Earl of Wessex 554
His character 555
His policy towards the crown 556
And towards the rival earls 557
Siward and the Scot kings 558, 559
1. Death of Siward 560
1. Tostig made earl of Northumbria 560
Significance of this step . . . . . 560—563
Alliance between the house of Leofric and Wales . . . 564
7. Settlement of the earldoms under Harold 564, 565
7. Death of the Ætheling Eadward 565
The growth of Harold's ambition 566, 567
3. His election as king met by the claims of William . . . 568
3. The Norwegian invasion and battle of Stamford Bridge . . 569
The Norman invasion and battle of Senlac . . . . . 569—572
3. Coronation of William 573
7. Rising against William 574
8. National revolt of the English 575, 576
1. The close of the Conquest 576, 577
Note on Archbishop Stigand . . . . . 578—581
Note on the character of Harold . . . . . 582—585

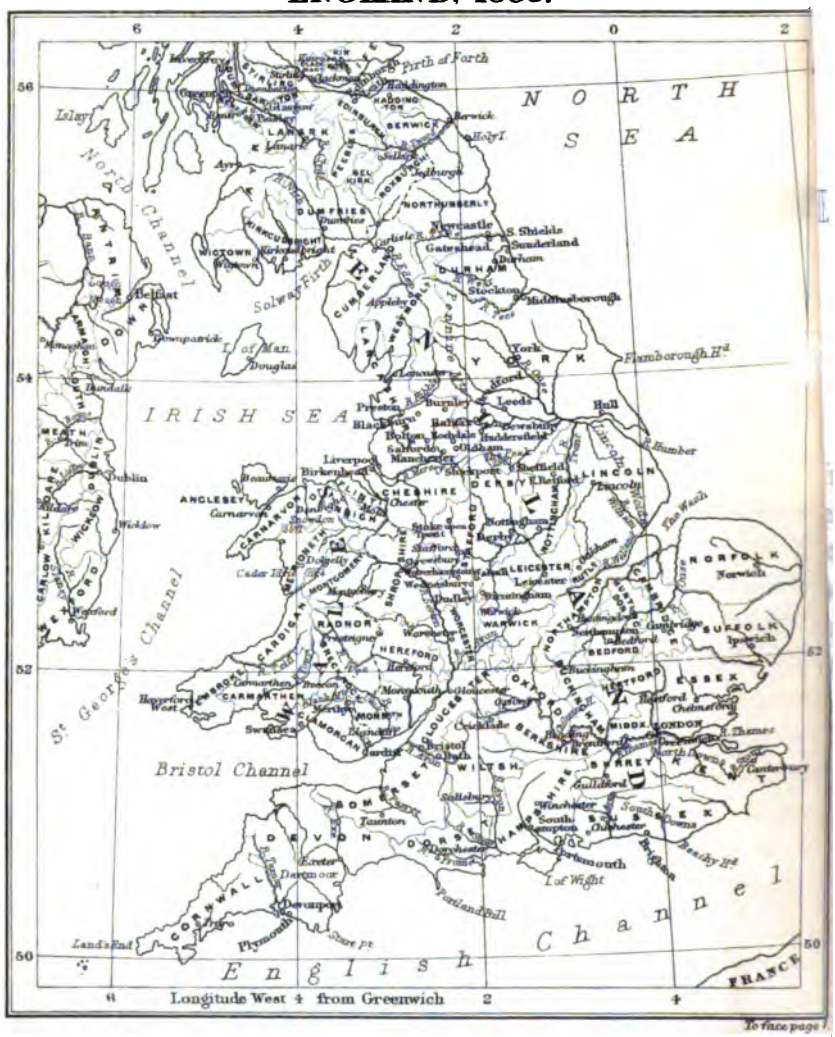
PORTRAIT

Engraved by G. J. STODART *from a chalk drawing by* F. SANDYS.

LIST OF MAPS.

I.	England, 1883	*To face page*	1
II.	Lines of Northern Invasions	" "	62
III.	England at the Treaty of Wedmore	" "	112
IV.	The Campaigns of Eadward and Æthelflæd	" "	197
V.	England under the Ealdormen	" "	316
VI.	Early Oxford		437
VII.	Early Chester		441
VIII.	Early York		451
IX.	Early London	*To face page*	455

ENGLAND, 1883.



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THE CONQUEST OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLAND OF ECGBERHT.

Social changes in Britain.

FEW periods of our history seem drearier and more unprofitable to one who follows the mere course of political events than the two hundred years which close with the submission of the English states to Ecgberht.[1] The petty and ineffectual strife of the Three Kingdoms, Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex, presents few features of human interest, while we are without the means of explaining the sudden revolutions which raise and depress their power, or their final subsidence into isolation and inaction. It is only when we view it from within that we see the importance of the time. It was in fact an age of revolution, an age in which mighty changes were passing over every phase of the life of Englishmen; an age in which heathendom was passing into Christianity, the tribal king into the national ruler, the ætheling

[1] See "Making of England," chap. viii. (A. S. G.)

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

into the thegn; an age in which English society saw the beginnings of the change which transformed the noble into a lord, and the free ceorl into a dependent or a serf; an age in which new moral conceptions told on the fabric of our early jurisprudence and in which custom began to harden into written law. Without, the new England again became a member of the European commonwealth, while within, the very springs of national life were touched by the mingling of new blood with the blood of the nation itself.

Character of its population.

The ethnological character of the country had in fact changed since the close of the age of conquest. The area of the ground subject to English rule was far greater than in the days of Ceawlin or Æthelfrith, but in the character of its population the portion added was very different from the earlier area; for while the Britons had been wholly driven off from the eastern half of the island, in the western part they remained as subjects of the conquerors. It was thus that in Ecgberht's day Britain had come to consist of three long belts of country, two of which stretched side by side from the utmost north to the utmost south, and the population of each of which was absolutely diverse. Between the eastern coast and a line which we may draw along the Selkirk and Yorkshire moorlands to the Cotswolds and Selwood, lay a people of wholly English blood. Westward again of the Tamar, of the western hills of Herefordshire, and of Offa's Dyke, lay a people whose blood was wholly Celtic. Between them, from the Lune to the coast of Dorset and Devon, ran the lands of the Wealhcyn, of folks, that is, in whose veins

British and English blood were already blending together and presaging in their mingling a wider blending of these elements in the nation as a whole.

The mixture of race.

The winning of Western Britain opened in fact a way to that addition of outer elements to the pure English stock which has gone on from that day to this without a break. Celt and Gael, Welshman and Irishman, Frisian and Flamand, French Huguenot and German Palatine, have come successively in, with a hundred smaller streams of foreign blood. The intermingling of races has nowhere been less hindered by national antipathy; and even the hindrances interposed by law, such as Offa's prohibition of marriage between English and Welsh, or Edward III.'s prohibition of marriage between English and Irish, have met with the same disregard. The result is that so far as blood goes few nations are of an origin more mixed than the present English nation; for there is no living Englishman who can say with certainty that the blood of any of the races we have named does not mingle in his veins. As regards the political or social structure of the people, indeed, this intermingling of blood has had little or no result. They remain purely English and Teutonic. The firm English groundwork which had been laid by the character of the early conquest has never been disturbed. Gathered gradually in, tribe by tribe, fugitive by fugitive, these outer elements were quietly absorbed into a people whose social and political form was already fixed. But though it would be hard to distinguish the changes wrought by the mixture of race

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

from the changes wrought by the lapse of time and the different circumstances which surround each generation, there can be no doubt that it has brought with it moral results in modifying the character of the nation. It is not without significance that the highest type of the race, the one Englishman who has combined in their largest measure the mobility and fancy of the Celt with the depth and energy of the Teutonic temper, was born on the old Welsh and English borderland, in the forest of Arden.

Character of the country.

Side by side with this change in the character of its population had gone on a change in the character of the country itself. Its outer appearance indeed still remained much the same as in earlier days. Not half its soil had as yet been brought under tillage; as the traveller passed along its roads, vast reaches of forest, of moor, of fen, formed the main landscape before him; even the open and tilled districts were broken everywhere by woods and thickets which the farmer needed for his homestead, for his fences, for his house-building, and his fire. But limited as was its cultivation Britain was no longer the mere sheet of woodland and waste which the English had found it. Population had increased,[1] and four hundred years of labour had done their work in widening the clearings and thinning the woods. We have already caught glimpses of such a work in the moorlands of the north, in the fens of the Wash, in the thickets of Arden, as the monk carried his axe into the forest, or the thegn planted tillers over the grants that had been

[1] Lingard ("Ang.-Sax. Church," i. 185) infers this from the new upgrowth of churches.

carved for him out of the waste "folk-land." The study of such a tract as the Andredsweald would show the same ceaseless struggle with nature—Sussex-men and Surrey-men mounting over the South-downs and the North-downs to hew their way forward to the future meeting of their shire-bounds in the heart of the Weald, while the vast herds of swine that formed the advance guard of the Cantwara who were cleaving their way westward along the Medway, pushed into the "dens" or glades in the woodland beyond.

Dorset.

We can see the general results of this industrial warfare in a single district, such as Dorset. When the English landed in Britain no tract was wilder or less civilized; its dense forest-reaches in fact checked the westward advance of the conquerors, and forced them to make their way slowly along the coast from the Stour to the Exe. Even when the Dorsætan were fairly settled there, the names of their hundreds and of the trysting-places of their courts show the wild state of the land. The hundred-moots gather at barrow or den, at burn or ford, in comb or vale, in glade or woodland, here beside some huge boulder or stone, there on the line of a primæval foss-dyke, or beneath some mighty and sacred tree.[1]

[1] For barrow-trysts, cf. Albretesberga (afterwards Cranbourne), Badbury, Modbury, Langeberga, Chalbury, Hunesberga; for "duns," Canendon (Wimbourne), Faringdon, Glochresdon; for boulders, Stane (Cerne Abbas), Golderonestone, some monolith by Burton Bradstock; for trees, Cuferdstroue, a tree on Culliford Barrow in Whitcomb parish; for foss, Concresdic or Combsditch; for glade, comb, burn, ford, wood, Cocden, Uggescomb, Sherborne, Tollerford, Ayleswood.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egberht.

But even its hundred names show how soon the winning of the land began. Dorchester tells of the new life growing up on the Roman ruins, Knolton and Gillingham of the new "tons" and "hams" which rose about the settlements of the conquerors; while Beaminster, Yetminster, and Christchurch recall the work of the new Christendom that settled at last on the soil. Nowhere indeed was the industrial work of the Church more energetic; we have seen how Ealdhelm planted centres of agriculture as well as of religion at Sherborne and Wareham, and if more than a third of the shire belonged in later days to the clergy, it was in the main because monk and priest had been foremost in the reclamation of the land.[1] Much indeed remained to be done. As late as the eve of the Norman conquest, but thirty or forty thousand inhabitants were scattered over the soil;[2] the king's forest-rights stretched over wild and waste throughout half the county, and even in the parts that had been won for culture, scrub and brushwood broke the less fruitful ground, while relics of the vanished woodland lingered in the copses beside every homestead, the "pannage woods" of beech and oak, and the "barren woods" of other timber that gave no mast to the swineherd.

Its industrial life.

But in spite of all, the work of civilization had begun. Little boroughs that, small as they were, already

[1] At the Conquest, the Bishop was the largest proprietor in the whole shire; he held in fact a tenth of it, while twice as much was held by religious houses at Shaftesbury, Cerne, Milton, and Abbotsbury. Eyton, "Dorset Domesday," 156.

[2] Eyton, "Dorset Domesday," 152.

formed centres of social and industrial life were rising beside the harbours of the coast or clustering under the shelter of the great abbeys. Even where the bulk of the land lay waste, pastures stretched along the lower slopes of the moorland, whose herbage, though too rough and broken for the scythe, gave fair grazing ground to the herds of the township, while by stream and river ran the meadow-lands of homestead after homestead, clear of scrub and thicket, girt in by ditch and fence. About the homestead stretched the broad acres of the corn-land, with gangs of eight oxen, each dragging its plough through the furrows. All the features of English life, in fact, all its characteristic figures were already there. We see mills grinding along the burns, the hammer rings in the village smithy, the thegn's hall rises out of its demesne, the parish priest is at his mass-book in the little church that forms the centre of every township, reeves are gathering their lord's dues, forester and verderer wake the silent woodland with hound and horn, the moot gathers for order and law beneath the sacred oak or by the grey stone on the moor, along the shore the well-to-do salt-men are busy with their salt-pans, and the fishers are washing their nets in the little coast hamlets, and setting apart the due of fish for their lords.[1]

[1] No manor was complete without its mill, and Domesday gives 272 mills in Dorset, some simply winter-mills, some on streamlets that have now wholly vanished. Most of the smiths lived in the country towns. Though salt was already dug from the Cheshire mines, the want of communication forced each district to supply itself as it could, and we find in Domesday between

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

Influence of Christianity.

Side by side, however, with this industrial change in the temper and aspect of the country was going on a far more profound change in its moral life. We have already noted the more striking and picturesque sides of the revolution which had been wrought in the displacement of the old faith and the adoption of the new, the planting of a Church on the soil with its ecclesiastical organization, its bishops, its priests, its court, and its councils, its language, its law, above all the new impulse given to political consolidation by the building up of Britain into a single religious communion. But these results of the new faith were small and unimportant beside the revolution which was wrought by it in individual life. From the cradle to the grave it had forced on the Englishman a new law of conduct, new habits, new conceptions of life and society. It entered above all into that sphere within which the individual will of the freeman had been till now supreme, the sphere of the home; it curtailed his powers over child and wife and slave; it forbade infanticide, the putting away of wives, or cruelty to the serf. It challenged almost every social conception; it denied to the king his heritage of the blood of the gods; it proclaimed slavery an evil, war an evil, manual labour a virtue. It met the feud face to face by denouncing revenge. It held up gluttony and drunkenness, the very

seventy and eighty salt-men along the Dorset coast, seemingly villeins, but paying such large rent as to prove their trade a profitable one. Fishers too were found along the coast, villeins like the salt-men, and like them paying dues to their lords. Eyton, "Dorset Domesday," pp. 50, 51.

essence of the old English "feast," as sins. It claimed to control every circumstance of life. It interfered with labour-customs by prohibitions of toil on Sundays and holy days. It forced on a rude community to which bodily joys were dear, long and painful fasts. Even profounder modifications were brought about by the changes it wrought in the personal history of every Englishman. Ceremonialism hung round every one in those old days from the cradle to the grave, and by the contact with Christendom the whole character of English ceremonialism was altered. The very babe felt the change. Baptism succeeded the "dragging through the earth" for Hertha. A new kin was created for child and parents in the "gossip" of the christening. The next great act of life, marriage, remained an act done before and with assent of the fellow-villagers; but new bonds of affinity limited a man's choice; and while the old hand-plighting and wed survived the priest's blessing was added. The burial-rite was as completely altered. The burial-fire was abolished; and instead of resting beneath his mound, like Beowulf, on some wind-swept headland or hill, the Christian warrior slept with his fellows in his lowly grave beneath the shade of the village church.

Its strife with Heathenism.

But if the old faith was beaten by the new it was long in being killed. A hundred years after the conversion of Kent, King Wihtræd had still to forbid Kentish-men "offering to devils."[1] At the very close of the eighth century synods in Mercia and Northumbria were struggling against the heathen

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 41.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

practice of eating horse-flesh[1] at the feast to Woden. In spite of this resistance however, Wodenism was so completely vanquished that even the coming of the Danes failed to revive it. The Christian priest had no longer to struggle against the worship of Thunder or of Frigga. But the far older nature-worship, the rude fetichism which dated back to ages long before history, had tougher and deeper roots. The new religion could turn the nature-deities of this primæval superstition into devils, its spells into magic, its spae-wives into witches, but it could never banish them from the imagination of men; it had in the end even to capitulate to the nature-worship, to adopt its stones and its wells, to turn its spells into exorcisms and benedictions, its charms into prayers. How persistent was the strength of the older belief we see even at a later time than we have reached. "If witches or diviners," says Eadward, "perjurers or morth-workers, or foul, defiled, notorious adulteresses be found anywhere within the land, let them be driven from the country and the people cleansed, or let them wholly perish within the country."[2] Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Æthelred,[3] are as vigorous in their enactments; and the Church Councils were fierce in their denunciations of these lower superstitions. "We earnestly forbid all heathendom," says a canon of Cnut's day. "Heathendom is that men worship idols; that is that they worship heathen gods,

[1] Confess. Ecgberti, Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," ii. 163. Haddan and Stubbs, "Councils," iii. 459.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 173.

[3] *Ibid.* i. 203, 247, 317.

and the sun or the moon, fire or rivers, water-wells or stones, or great trees of any kind; or that they love witchcraft or promote 'morth-work' in any wise, or by 'blot' or by 'fyrht,' or do anything of like illusions."[1] "If witches or diviners, morth-workers or adulteresses, be anywhere found in the land, let them be diligently driven out of the country, or let them wholly perish in the country, save that they cease and amend."[2] The effort of the kings and the Church was far from limiting itself to words. In the tenth century we hear of the first instance of a death in England for heresy, in the actual drowning of a witch-wife at London Bridge.[3]

Survival of heathen customs.

But against many a heathen usage even Councils did not struggle. Easter-fires, May-day-fires, Midsummer-fires, with their numerous ceremonies, the rubbing the sacred flame,[4] the running through the glowing embers, the throwing flowers on the fire, the baking in it and distributing large loaves and cakes, with the round dance about it, remained village-customs. At Christmas the entry of the boar's head, decked with laurel and rosemary, recalled the sacrifice of the boar to Frigga at the Midwinter feast of the old heathendom. The Autumn-Feast lingered on unchallenged in the village harvest-home with the sheaf, in old times a symbol of the god, nodding gay with flowers and ribbons on the last wagon. As the ploughman took to his plough he still chanted the prayer that, though christened as it were by the new

[1] Laws of Cnut. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 379.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] Cod. Dip. 591.
[4] Kemble, "Sax. in England," i. 360.

CHAP. I. The England of Ecgberht.

faith, remained in substance a cry to the Earth-Goddess of the old, "Earth, Earth, Earth, Mother Earth, grant thee the Almighty One, grant thee the Lord, acres waxing, and sprouts wantoning . . . . . and the broad crops of barley, and the white wheat-crop, and all crops of earth." So as he drove the first furrow he sang again, "Hail, Mother Earth, thou feeder of folk, be thou growing by goodness of God, filled with fodder, the folk to feed."[1]

The clergy.

But if Christianity failed in winning a complete victory in this strife with the primæval religion which the tradition of ages had almost made a part of human thought and feeling, its outer victory over individual and social life was unquestioned. One of its momentous results was the intrusion into the social system of a new class, that of the clergy. The shorn head had its own social rights. Bishop, priest, lesser clerk, had each his legal "wer" as well as king, thegn, ceorl. The churchmen formed a distinct element in the state, an element to which in numbers, wealth, influence, jurisdiction, character, nothing analogous existed in the older English society; a class with its own organization, rule, laws, discipline, carefully defined by written documents in face of a world where all was yet vague, fluctuating, traditional. But this class had hardly taken its place in English society when influences from without and from within began to modify its relation to the general body of the state; and yet more radical modifications were brought about by the Danish wars. The very character of the Church was changed. English

[1] Cockayne, "Saxon Leechdoms, etc.," vol. i. pp. 402—405.

Christianity had in its earlier days been specially monastic. But the development of the country was fast changing the relation of monasticism to its religious needs. The earlier monasteries had been practically mission-stations—centres from which preachers went out to convert the country, and from which after its conversion priests were still sent about to conduct its worship. But as the country became Christian the place of these missionaries was taken by the parish priest. The influence of the unmonastic clergy, the seculars as they were termed, superseded that of the regulars. It was not by monasteries but by its parochial organization that the Church was henceforth to penetrate into the very heart of English society.

The Growth of the parish.

It was only by slow degrees that the parish, or kirkshire as it was then called, attained a settled form. The three classes of churches which we find noted in the laws mark so many stages in the religious annexation of the land. The minster, or mother church, which levied dues over wide tracts,[1] recalled the earlier days when the Church still had an exclusively monastic form, and its preachers went forth from mountain centres to evangelize the country. The next stage was represented by the manorial church, the establishment within this wide area by lord after lord of churches on their own estates[2] for the service of their dependants, the extent of whose spiritual jurisdiction was at first coincident with that of the estate itself. A third class of small churches without

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 263, 265; Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 262.

[2] See Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 191, 263.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

burial-grounds represented the growing demands of popular religion. From Bæda's letter to Archbishop Ecgberht we see that the establishment of manorial churches, that is, of what we commonly mean by a parochial system, was still far from complete, at least in Northumbria, in the middle of the eighth century; but in the half century that followed, it had probably extended itself fairly over the land. An attempt was also made to provide a settled livelihood for the parish priests in the "tithe" or payment of a tenth of the farm-produce by their parishioners;[1] but the obligation to pay this was still only imperfectly recognized, and the repeated injunctions of kings and synods from Æthelstan downwards witness, by their repetition, to the general disobedience. It is probable that the priest as yet relied far more for his subsistence on his dues, on the "plough-alms" after Easter, the "church-shot" at Martinmas, and "light-shot" thrice in the year, as well as the "soul-shot" that was paid at the open grave.

The parish and the township.

Nothing is more remarkable in this extension of the ecclesiastical system than the changes wrought by it in the original unit of English social life. The stages by which the township passed into its modern form of the parish, and by which almost every trace of its civil life successively disappeared, are obscure and hard to follow, but the change began with the first entry of the Christian priest into the township.[2] The

[1] "A tithe of young by Pentecost, and of earth-fruits by All Hallows mass," Laws of Æthelred. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 319. See Laws of Eadward and Guthrum, *ib.* p. 171.

[2] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 96, 104, 260.

village church seems often to have been built on the very mound that had served till then for the gatherings of the tunsfolk. It is through this that we so often find in later days the tun-moot held in the church-yard or ground about the church, and the common practice even now of the farmers gathering for conference outside the church porch before morning service may preserve a memory of this freer open-air life of the moot before it became merged in the parish vestry. The church thus became the centre of village-life; it was at the church-door as in the moot, that "banns" were proclaimed, marriages or bargains made; even the "fair," or market, was held in the church-yard, and the village-feast, an institution no doubt of immemorial antiquity, was held on the day of the saint to which the church was dedicated; while the priest himself, as its custodian, displaced more and more the tun-reeve or elder. It was he who preserved the weights and measures of the little community,[1] who headed the "beating" of its bounds, who administered its oaths and ordeals,[2] who led its four chosen men to hundred-moot or folk-moot, and sometimes even to the field. The revolution which was transforming the free township into the manor of a lord aided in giving the priest a public position. Though the lord's court came to absorb the bulk of the work of the older tun-moot, the regulation and apportionment of the land, the enforcement of by-laws, the business of its police, yet the tun-moot retained the little that grant or

[1] Lingard, "Anglo-Saxon Church," i. 171.
[2] *Ibid.* ii. 132 *et seq.*

CHAP. I. The England of Ecgberht.

custom had not stripped from it; and it is thus that, in its election of village officers, of churchwarden and waywarden, as well as in its exercise of the right of taxation within the township for the support of church and poor, we are enabled to recognize in the parish vestry with the priest at its head the survival of the village-moot which had been the nucleus of our early life.[1]

Pilgrimages.

Without, the new faith brought England for the first time, as we have seen, into religious contact with the western world through the mission-work of Boniface and his followers in Germany, and into political contact with it through the relations which this mission work established with the Empire of the Franks. But a social contact of a far closer and more national kind was brought about by the growth of pilgrimages. At the time which we have reached, pilgrimages were among the leading features of English life. The spell which the mere name of Rome had thrown over Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop had only wrought the more widely as years went on. From churchman it passed to layman, and the enthusiasm reached its height when English kings laid down their crowns to become suppliants at the shrine of the apostles. Fresh from his slaughter of the Jutes in the Isle of Wight, the West-Saxon Ceadwalla "went to Rome, being desirous to obtain the peculiar honour of being washed in the font of baptism within the church of the blessed apostles, for he had learned that in baptism alone the entrance of heaven is opened to mankind, and he hoped that

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 104.

laying down his flesh as soon as he was baptized, he being cleansed, should immediately pass to the eternal joys of heaven. Both which things came to pass as he had conceived them in his mind. For coming to Rome," in 689, "he was baptized on the holy Saturday before Easter Day, and being still in his white garment he fell sick, was freed from the flesh," on the 20th of April, "and was associated with the blessed in heaven."[1] Twenty years later a king of the Mercians and a king of the East Saxons quitted their thrones to take the tonsure at Rome,[2] and in 725 even Ine of Wessex gave up the strife with the anarchy about him, and made his way to die amidst the sacred memories of the holy city.

Their dangers.

The pilgrimages of the kings gave a new energy to the movement, and from this time the pilgrims' way was thronged by groups of English folk, "noble and ceorl, layman and clerk, men and women."[3] The dangers and hardships of the journey failed to deter them. The road which the pilgrims followed was mainly the same by which English travellers now-a-days reach Italy; they landed at Quentavic near Boulogne, which was then the chief port of the northern coast of Gaul, and crossing the high grounds of Burgundy at Langres[4] journeyed along the Saone valley and Savoy to the passes of Mount Cenis. It was in these Alpine districts that the

[1] Bæd. H. E. lib. v. c. 7.

[2] *Ibid.* lib. v. c. 19.

[3] Bæd. H. E. lib. v. c. 7, "Quod his temporibus plures de gente Anglorum, nobiles, ignobiles, laici, clerici, viri et feminæ, certatim facere, consuerunt."

[4] Bæda, "Lives of Abbots of Wearmouth," sec. 21.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egbert.

troubles of the pilgrims reached their height; for if an Archbishop of Canterbury could be frozen to death in traversing them[1] we may conjecture how severe must have been the sufferings of poorer travellers; but to the natural hardships of the journey was added the hostility of their fellow-men. To the robber lords of the mountain valleys pilgrims were a natural prey. It was in vain that Offa and Cnut alike sought protection for their subjects from Charles the Great and the Emperor Conrad. Imperial edicts told little on the greed of these hungry mountain wolves; an archbishop was plundered in Cnut's own day; and soon after the marauders were lucky enough to pillage three bishops as well.[2] It was in vain that the wayfarers gathered into companies for mutual protection;[3] for the country with its defiles and precipices was itself on the side of their assailants, and in the opening of the tenth century we hear of the surprise and slaughter of two bodies of English pilgrims in the mountains.

Their popularity.

But neither the dangers of the journey nor the fever that awaited them at its close checked the rush of pilgrims.[4] The increase in number indeed had been accompanied by a falling off in the character of the travellers. In some cases the exemption from port-dues which was granted to pilgrims seems to

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontif." (Opera, ed. Migne, col. 1453).

[2] Angl. Sacr. ii. 129.

[3] We find eighty Englishmen in the train of Abbot Ceolfrid of Wearmouth. Bæda, "Lives of Abbots of Wearmouth," sec. 21.

[4] "Magna febris fatigatio advenas illic venientes visitare seu gravare solet." Life of St. Winibald, ap. Canis. p. 126, quoted by Lingard, "Anglo-Saxon Church," ii. 127.

have been used as a cover for smuggling; while the custom of enforcing a visit to the shrine of St. Peter as a penance for ecclesiastical crimes must have introduced a criminal element into the pilgrim companies. The association was the easier as the unshorn hair and beard which the law imposed on the "banished" man was also the customary mark of the pilgrim. Poverty too told hardly on the virtue of the women devotees; and Boniface, with a touch of priestly exaggeration, protests that by the middle of the eighth century Englishwomen of evil life could be found in every city in Lombardy.[1] But the religious impulse never ceased to supply worthier pilgrims than these; there was indeed so constant a stream of Englishmen traversing Rome from shrine to shrine, listening to its wild legends, gathering relics, books, gold-work, and embroidery, that it was necessary by Offa's day to found a distinct quarter of the town, called the "Saxon School," for their reception and shelter.

Written and unwritten law.

It would be hard to trace out the multifold forms in which the new religion impressed itself upon the social and political organization of the people whom it had won. We have already seen the influence which it exerted on the intellectual development of the country, but if the art of writing, as the missionaries introduced it, made a revolution in our literature, it made an even greater revolution in our law. Law, as all early tribes understood it, was simply the custom of each separate people as uttered from memory by its "law-man," under check of his assessors and

[1] Lett. Bonif. (ed. Giles), lxiii. p. 146; cf. xlix. p. 104.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egbert.

of the gathered folk. Such utterances were looked on as changeless and divine. The authority of the past was in fact unquestioned; the people itself was conscious of no power to change the customs of its fathers; and it was only by an unconscious adaptation to the varying circumstances of each generation that this oral law was ceaselessly modified. But with the writing down of these customs the whole conception of law was changed. Not only was its sacred character, as well as the mystery which veiled its sources in the memory of the law-man, taken from it, but the mere writing them down fixed and hardened the customs themselves and took from them their power of adaptation and self-development; for change in the laws could henceforth only be wrought consciously, and on grounds of reason or necessity which questioned or set aside the authority they drew from the past.

Early English codes.

What caused this revolution to be so little felt was the slowness with which it was wrought. Great as was the fame of Æthelberht's code among scholars like Bæda, it was long before the rival states followed the example of Kent. There is nothing to warrant us in believing that written law reached Wessex before Ine, or Mercia before Offa, or that it ever reached Northumbria at all. The sphere, too, of the written code remained a narrow and partial one; it restricted itself for the most part to such customs as were affected by the new moral conceptions which Christianity brought in and the new social order it created, or to the changes in police or in land-tenure which sprang from the natural advance

of population and wealth.[1] Æthelberht's laws are little more than a record of the customary fines for penal offences, with a provision for the legal status of the new Christian priesthood,[2] and in the Kentish codes that follow, it is mainly on the ecclesiastical side that the area of legislation is widened.[3] Ine found himself forced by the advance of industry and by a new state of public order to deal largely with the subjects of agriculture and police,[4] while fresh provisions were needed to regu-

[1] The earliest codes we possess are those of Kent, the laws of Æthelberht (ab. 600), those of Hlothere and Eadric (673—685), and those of Wihtræd (ab. 690). Ine's laws (676—705) are our only West-Saxon code. The Mercian code of Offa (755—794), though used by Ælfred in his compilation, is now lost.

[2] Out of ninety clauses, forty-one fix the fines for injury to various parts of the body. Almost all the laws refer to violent attacks on person or property: there is no mention of trade or agriculture. The Church is mentioned in the first provision alone.

[3] The Church is not mentioned in Hlothere and Eadric's laws, of whose sixteen provisions about half are fines for violence, the rest being for the most part regulations as to plaints in a suit, chapmen, and man-stealing; but those of Wihtræd are almost wholly ecclesiastical.

[4] A fourth of Ine's laws are concerned with agriculture in some way or other, such as the fencing of lands, protection of woods, cattle-stealing and maiming, trespass, firing of fences, &c. Few relate to acts of violence, but nearly a quarter of the whole code is concerned with theft, while the subject of trade comes for the first time prominently forward. Legal procedure again is largely treated. Under internal police we may place the provisions for determining the relations of a man with his lord, for regulating the quitting of lands, and the like. The laws against mutilation of cattle, no doubt records of early custom, are really directed against damage done to what was the general medium of exchange, for a mutilated beast was useless for purposes of barter.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

late the position of the Welsh who had submitted to his sword; but in other ways the bounds of his legislation are as narrow as those of the Kentish code, nor, so far as we can gather from Ælfred's compilation, were those of Offa any wider. To the last, indeed, the whole of our family law, with the bulk of our village and of our land law, remained purely oral.

Early English jurisprudence.

The new moral ideas which were generated alike by Christianity and by the settlement of the community itself in more peaceful and industrious form told with equal force on English jurisprudence. A glance at the early history of our national justice shows that its original groundwork was the right of feud. Older than "the peace of the folk," far older than "the king's peace," which was to succeed it, was the "frith" or peace of the freeman himself, the right that each man had to secure for himself safe life and sound limb. He lay, as the phrase ran then, "in his own hand."[1] It was his right to fight his foe, his right and even his duty personally to exact vengeance for wrong done to him; and his kinsmen were bound by their tie of blood to aid him alike in self-defence and in revenge. Traces of this older state of things, in which every freeman was his own absolute guardian and avenger, ran through the whole structure of

[1] "Mund" or "hand" meant the protection conferred by any one and the peace consequent on it, and "mund-bryce," or "hand-breach," was the violent breaking in on this peace and the sum paid as atonement for such a "breach of the peace."—"Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law," (Boston) p 279. Even in later days we may note that before paying the "wite," or fine for the breach of the "folk-peace," a culprit has to pay the bôt, or atonement to the wronged man for the breach of his own peace.

our later jurisprudence and procedure. A man might slay one whom he found in his own house within closed doors with his wife, or daughter, or sister, or mother;[1] he might slay the thief whom he caught red-handed in the actual commission of his theft,[2] or the accused man who would not come in peacefully to make answer to the charge.[3] But as a general right, that of unregulated vengeance had long passed away before Saxon or Engle reached Britain. The conquerors came as "folks"; and the very existence of a folk implied a "folk-frith" of the community as a whole. Every man of the folk lay in "the folk's hand"; and, wrong-doer as he might be, it was only when the "hand" was opened, and its protection withdrawn, that the folk could suffer him to be maimed or slain.[4] The earliest conception therefore of public justice was a solemn waiver on the part of the community of its right and duty of protection in the case of one who had wronged his fellow member of the folk. Till such a waiver was given the wrong-doer remained in the folk's "mund"; and to act against him without such a waiver or without appeal to the folk was to act against the folk itself, for it was a breach of the peace or frith to which his "mund" entitled him. It was the demand for such a withdrawal of the public protection that constituted

[1] Ll. Ælfred, 4. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 91.

[2] Ll. Ine, 12, 16, 21, 28, 35. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 111—125.

[3] Ll. Eadw. and Guthr. 6. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 171.

[4] "It was a fundamental rule of German law that vengeance must be authorised by previous permission of the Court, or if it preceded the judgment, it must afterwards be justified before the tribunal."—"Essays in Angl. Sax. Law," p. 264.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egbert.

the trial, and the folk were the only judges of the demand. Thrice, and before good witness, had the summons to the folk-moot or court to be given by the accuser to the man he charged with the crime, and that at his own house, at the sunsetting, and seven days before the moot. Refusal thrice repeated on the part of the accused to hearken to the summons to make answer in the folk-moot, or to submit to its doom, was a contempt of the folk; but only after three-fold refusal was the folk's "mund" withdrawn from him; till then the wronged man who sought his own vengeance for the wrong broke the folk-frith and became a wrong-doer in his turn.

The feud and the folk.

It was thus that folk-moot and hundred-moot assumed a judicial character. Originally they were no courts of justice in the modern sense of the word; they did not decide on the truth or falsehood of the charge made, still less did they assign a punishment for wrong done. The wrong was still between man and man; its punishment, if punished it was, must be exacted by the wronged man or his kinsfolk from the wrong-doer by sheer fighting; but ere the fight could begin the leave of the folk at large had to be sought and given. The license ran in words long preserved in English law, "homini liceat pugnare," "you may fight."[1] But before such a license could be procured, it was needful that the folk should decide that the man had a right to fight; and the accused thus found himself fronted by the oath,[2] the solemn appeal to

[1] Ælfred, 42. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," p. 91.

[2] See the collection of oaths in Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," vol. i. 179—185.

heaven. It may be that here again men looked on their fellow-men as being in the "mund," not only of the folk, but in a higher sense of the gods they served, and that, as the appearance of the accuser before the moot was a seeking for the discharge of the wrong-doer from the protection of the folk, so the oath was a seeking for his discharge from the protection of his heavenly lord and guardian. But whether such a conception, or more dim and vague ideas of awe and dread, as of a vengeance of the gods on men who wronged them by falsehood, gave birth to the oath, it was the soul of the judicial process before the folk-moot. By a fore-oath the accuser stated his charge against the accused;[1] and if the accused met oath with oath the appeal was complete. With the truth or falsehood of the charge the folk had nothing to do: what it had to do was to judge whether the charge was of such a sort, and made in such a way, as to give the accuser fair ground for seeking amends from the accused. If such was its judgment, the folk withdrew its "mund," and suffered the two contending parties to wage their war.

The bounds of the feud.

But its jurisdiction was not yet exhausted. As a people interested in its own peace and order, the folk had still the right as it had the power to determine how this war should be waged. Even in the earliest days custom had thrown its bonds round the wild right of private war. It had forbidden all secret vengeance, such as poisoning, all mutilation or cold-blooded cruelty, all concealment of the deed. Though

[1] He might show, without oath, the wound with which he charged him, and this stood in place of the oath.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

in vengeance or self-defence a man might slay his foe if he met him, yet "If a man slay another man in revenge or self-defence," ran a law which, late as the date of its embodiment in writing may be, is clearly a record of primæval usage, "let him take to himself none of the goods of the dead, neither his horse, nor helmet, nor shield, nor any money, but in wonted manner let him arrange the body of the dead man, his head to the west, his feet to the east, upon his shield, if he have it; and let him drive deep his lance, and hang there his arms, and to it rein in the dead man's steed; and let him go to the nearest vill and declare his deed to the first man he meets, that he may make proof and have defence against the kindred and friends of the man he has slain."[1] The same web of custom threw itself round the wider warfare of the kin. As late as the days of Ælfred[2] we see the kindred of the slain man gathered, their quick secret ride over the country, the foe's house surrounded and besieged; but not for seven days, ran law or custom, must attack be made, for seven days the vengeance-seeker and his kinsfolk must watch the house, while the wrong-doer within takes counsel with them of his household whether to surrender or to fight. If within these days he chose to surrender, for thirty days more they lay about the house, while the wrong-doer sent about his friends and kinsmen to find men who would aid him in the atonement for his crime,[3] and it was not till these were gathered that taking one of his

[1] Hen. I. 83, sec. 6. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 591.
[2] Ll. Ælfred, 42. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 91.
[3] Ll. Eadmund, ii. 7. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws." i. 251.

house as a spokesman he gave him pledge that he would make full atonement, and with this pledge the spokesman came forth to the kindred of the slain. Again in their turn these gave pledge that the slayer might draw near in peace and himself give pledge for the "wer," or atonement for his crime. It was only when he stood before them and gave his free pledge for this payment, and strengthened it by giving security for its completion, that the feud was at an end.

Eadmund's reforms.

With all these bounds and limitations, however, the feud became more and more incompatible with the growing sense of humanity and public order. "Both I and all of us," said Eadmund in a proclamation to his people,[1] "hold in horror the unrighteous and manifold fightings that exist among ourselves." It jarred too with the conception of personal responsibility that Christianity had introduced, and which was deepening as the bonds of kinship grew weaker with the progress of society. Eadmund's law, indeed, struck a heavy blow at the very principle of kinship :—"If henceforth any man slay another, let him bear the feud himself (save that by the aid of his friends and within twelve months he make amends with the full wer), to be borne as he may. If his kinsmen forsake him and will not pay for him, it is my will that all the kindred be out of feud, save the actual doer of the deed, provided that they do not give him either food or protection. . . . Moreover, if any of the other man's kinsmen take vengeance upon any man save the actual doer of the deed, let him be foe to the king

[1] Ll. Eadmund. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 246.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

and all his friends and forfeit all that he has."[1] It was only slowly that so great a change in custom and feeling as this law implies could be actually brought about, and the feud still remained, however hampered by reforms, the base of our criminal procedure; but its enactment shows that the change had begun, and that two conceptions from whose union our modern justice was to spring, the conception of personal responsibility for crime, and the conception of crime as committed primarily not against the individual but against the public peace, were from this time to exercise a deepening influence on national sentiment.

The "folk's justice."

In the reforms of Eadmund however we have passed long beyond the jurisprudence of the time of Ecgberht. At the opening of the ninth century English thought was still far from our modern conceptions of justice or law, from the conception of crime as committed primarily against the public peace, as cognizable only by public authority, and as corrected by public punishment. As yet, and for centuries to come, all that either king or community attempted to do was to bring the right of private vengeance and self-protection within definite and customary bounds, to subject it to the previous sanction and permission of the folk in the folk-moot, to provide means for averting it where no good grounds existed for its exercise by solemn oath or ordeal of innocence on the part of the accused, or where such grounds really existed to provide and extend the sphere of a fixed and customary atonement in place of actual blood-shedding. Scant, however, as such a justice may seem to modern eyes,

[1] Ll. Eadmund. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 249.

it would have been practically effective for the purposes of public order had any adequate machinery existed for imposing the will of the folk on accuser and accused. But the folk-moot had no direct means of enforcing its doom. If a man thrice refused, after due summons, to appear before it, or appeared but refused to bow to its decision, he put himself indeed by his very act out of the folk, and out of its protection; he became in a word, an "outlaw," who might be hunted down like a wolf, and knocked on the head by any man who met him.[1] But beyond this general hostility the folk had no means of forcing such an offender to submit to its judgment. A yet weightier obstacle to efficient justice was often found in the course of procedure itself. Accuser and accused brought kinsmen and friends in their train to the folk-moot, whether to sway its doom or to enforce it, or to guard against vengeance without law. With such a crowd of adherents at the moot, it must always have been hard for meaner men to get justice against king's thegn or country thegn, and as the nobles rose to a new height above the people, it was easy for them to hold hundred-moot and even folk-moot at bay. Kent was among the most civilized and orderly parts of England, but at an even later time than this we find the great men of Kent setting the doom of its folk-moot absolutely at defiance.[2]

The "king's justice."

It was this difficulty more than all else that must have led to the passing of the "folk's justice" into "the justice of the king." From the earliest days

[1] "Ess. in Ang.-Sax. Law," 271, 275, 283.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 217.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

the king had been recognized not only as a political and military leader, but as a judge; and he was the one judge whose position gave him the power of enforcing his dooms, for by himself or by his ealdorman the whole military strength of the kingdom or shire could be called out to bring a culprit to submission. It was natural that as the local courts found themselves more and more helpless against the great lords they should appeal to a force before which the greatest lords must bow; and that the baffled Witan of Kent should pray Æthelstan that "if any man be so rich or of so great kin that he cannot be punished or will not cease from his wrong-doing, you may settle how he may be carried away into some other part of your kingdom, be the case whose it may, whether of villein or thegn."[1] The extension, too, of thegnhood, and the growth of private jurisdictions or sokes, exempt from the common jurisdiction of the hundred-moot, gave a new scope to the justice of the king.[2] As such private jurisdictions grew more and more frequent, they not only weakened the older justice of the people, but forced on the royal court a large development of its judicial activity, if the justice of the lords was to be hindered from passing into a means of extortion and tyranny.

The king's court.

Such a development was made easy by the very character of the king's court. The English king was a great landowner, and like other great landowners he

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 217.

[2] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 214, &c. "It is probable that, except in a few special cases, the sac and soc thus granted were before the Conquest exemptions from the hundred courts only, and not from those of the shire."

was driven from one "vill" to another for actual subsistence. He was in constant motion, for payments were made in kind, and it was only by moving from manor to manor that he could eat up his rents. A Northumbrian king had to consume his customary dues in one vill at the foot of the Cheviots and in another on the Don. A king of Wessex had no other means of gathering his rents from his demesne on the Exe or on the Thames. The king's court therefore was really a moving body, a little army eating its way from demesne to demesne, but with a home in our modern sense nowhere, encamping at one or another spot only for so long as the rent-in-kind sufficed, and then after a day or two rolling onward. In the stories of the time[1] we see the king's fore-runners pushing ahead of the train, arriving in haste at the spot destined for the next halt, broaching the beer-barrels, setting the board, slaying and cooking the kine, baking the bread; till the long company come pounding in through the muddy roads, horsemen and spearmen, thegn and noble, bishop and clerk, the string of sumpter horses, the big waggons with the royal hoard or the royal wardrobe, and at last the heavy standard borne before the king himself. Then follows the rough justice-court, the hasty council, the huge banquet, the fires dying down into the darkness of the night, till a fresh dawn wakes the fore-runners to seek a fresh encampment.

Such was in greater or less degree the life of every

[1] See for Ine, Will. Malmesbury, "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. p. 49; for Æthelstan, the Saxon Life of Dunstan (Memorials of Dunstan, pp. 17, 18).

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

The court on progress.

great noble, and such necessarily was that of the king. But with the growing consolidation of England into a single realm these movements took a more ceremonious and political form. Custom came to regulate the seeming disorder of the royal progress; each manor, each town, knows and makes its customary payments in kind, thegn and villein render their customary service, while the royal clerk reads from the custom-roll and ticks off the dues paid and the service done. "Watching the king," in fact, finding horses for his journey, or boats for his sail, guarding his person, supplying his larder, become the customary tenures by which towns hold their freedom. The progresses grow regular and methodical; men know when their king will be among them, they know where to bring their suit, their plea, their gift to him. As the king moves through forest and waste, his progress is a chase; he finds his foresters in waiting with the villeins bound to customary service in driving the deer. As he passes over the "king's highway," landlord and thegn are called to give account for broken road or broken bridge. In his rough justice-court there is the appeal to be heard, the false moneyer to be branded, the outlaw to be hanged at the nearest oak. The "king's peace" is about him as he goes; his "grith," the breach of which no fine can atone for,[1] spreads for a given space around his court: a double "bôt" and fine protects all who are on their way to him; if a brawler fight over his cups in the king's hall, he may die at the king's will.[2] The court

[1] Æthelr. iii. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 293.

[2] Ine, sec. 6. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 107.

itself is no longer the mere train of personal attendants which followed a provincial king; it is a little army that needs its officers to order and marshal it, its chamberlain to command the household to deck the rough halls with courtly hangings for the king's stay, to issue from the hoard the gold drinking-cups for the king's table, to pay and command the body guard; its staller to order its movements, to direct the horses, the sumpter mules, the long string of waggons, as well as to "park" the vast encampment for the night; its dish-thegn and cup-thegn to provide the beeves and bread, the wines and ale, for its daily consumption. The creation of these great officers of the household, some of whom we find already existing in Ælfred's time, was one of the most important results of the royal progresses. But a yet more important result was the impulse they gave to the change in our system of justice, for at a time when the public needs called for a judicial power which should be strong enough to enforce its doom upon noble and churl, and supreme alike over folk-moot and soke, the progresses of the king carried such a power into every corner of the realm.

Growth of the kingship.

The developement however of English justice was but one of the influences that were telling throughout the period on the transformation of the English kingship. As England drew together into its Three Kingdoms the wider dominion of the king removed him further and further from his people, lifting him higher and higher above the nobles, and clothing him more and more with a mysterious dignity. Every reign raised the sovereign in the social scale. The

CHAP. I.

The England of Egbert.

bishop, once ranked equal with him in value of life, sank to the level of the ealdorman. The ealdorman himself, in earlier days the hereditary ruler of a smaller state, became a mere delegate of the king. The king, if he was no longer sacred as the son of Woden, became yet more sacred as "the Lord's Anointed." By the very fact of his consecration he was pledged to a religious rule, to justice, mercy and good government; but his "hallowing" invested him also with a power drawn not from the will of man or the assent of his subjects but from the will of God. Treason against him thus became the worst of crimes, while personal service at his court was held not to degrade but to ennoble. The thegns of his household found themselves officers of state; and the developement of politics, the wider extension of home and foreign affairs, gradually transformed these royal servants into a standing council of ministry for the transaction of the ordinary administrative business, and the reception of judicial appeals.

The ætheling and the thegn.

The rise of the royal power was furthered by the change which passed at this time over the character of the English noble. Not only was the character of this class profoundly affected by the consolidation of the smaller folks into larger realms, but its whole relation to the king was radically changed. The superiority of the ætheling over the ceorl was a traditional superiority which reached back to the very infancy of the race, and which consisted in an actual difference, as both believed, of blood and origin. The tribal king was simply the noblest among the æthelings. But with the extinction of the smaller king-

ships, and the subjection of both classes to one of the greater monarchies, the position of the hereditary noble was changed. He was no longer of the same blood with the king; while the wider area of the state, and the number of æthelings it necessarily included within it, lowered his individual position and brought him nearer to the ceorl. At the same time he was being displaced from his older position by nobles of a new and distinct class. Service with the kings, as we have seen, begot the class of thegns; and while the hereditary noble dwindled with the growth of kingship, the noble by service necessarily rose with it. An ætheling of the Middle English inevitably grew less and less important as the Mercian kingdom widened its bounds from sea to sea, while a thegn of the Mercian court grew as inevitably greater. And to the greatness that came of his relation to a greater master the thegn added a corresponding superiority of wealth. The possessions of the village noble might lift him above his fellow villager, but they could not vie with the wide domains which the kings of the great states carved out of the folk-land for their thegns.[1] The æthelings thus died down into a social class, while the thegns took their place as a political nobility dependent on the crown.

The Witenagemot

A further developement of the royal power sprang from the changes wrought in the older national institutions by the disappearance of the tribal kingships in the larger monarchies of the Three Kingdoms.

[1] These grants had become so frequent, that even by Ine's time, though some gesiths remained landless, this was exceptional. Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 181, note 3.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egberht.

The life of the earlier English state was gathered up in its folk-moot. There through its representatives, chosen in every hundred-moot, the folk expressed and exercised its own sovereignty in matters of justice, as of peace and war. But when the folk sank into a portion of a wider state, its folk-moot sank with it; if it still met it was only to exercise one of its older functions, that of supreme justice-court, while political supremacy passed from it to the court of the far-off lord.[1] And as the folk-moot died down into the later shire-moot or county-court the folk's influence on government came to an end. Folk-moots of Surreymen or South Saxons could exercise no control over a king of Wessex. Folk-moots of Hwiccas or North Engle could bring no check to bear on a king of Mercia. Nor was the loss of this influence made up by the control of the nobler class. Beside the folk-moot, and acting with it, had stood the Witenagemot, the group of æthelings gathered to give rede to the king, and through him to propose a course of action to the folk. On these the growth of the monarchies did not tell as directly as on the folk-moot. Nobles could still gather about the king; and while the folk-moot passes out of political notice, the Witenagemot is heard of more and more as a royal council. But if the name remained, the meeting itself became a wholly different one. The decline in the class of æthelings, their displacement by the thegn, would alone have altered its character. The distance of the king from the nobles' homes, as the lesser realms were gathered into the Three Kingdoms, altered it yet more. When a West-

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 140, 141.

Saxon king called his Witan to Exeter he probably expected few thegns from Sussex or Kent. When he called them to Kent he can hardly have seen many from Cornwall or the Defn-sætan. From the opening of the age of consolidation, therefore, the Witenagemot naturally changed into a mere gathering of bishops and great ealdormen, as well as of the royal thegns in service at the court;[1] and it retained this form under the kings of a single England, with just such an increase of numbers as necessarily resulted from the welding of the three realms into one. The seventeen bishops of the English sees, about an equal number of ealdormen, whom we may again presume to be actual rulers of the various folks and under-kingdoms, a few abbots, and some fifty or sixty nobles and thegns, comprised the list at its fullest. But the usual gatherings hardly exceed in number those of Offa's court; and even under later kings, such as Eadgar, the usual Witenagemots number some nine prelates, five ealdormen, and fifteen thegns.[2]

Its character.

Such a council might in many ways reflect the national temper, but it was in no sense a representative of the nation. On occasions of peculiar solemnity indeed, such as that of a coronation or the

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 146. The Witenagemot that gathered round such a king as Offa consisted only of the five bishops of the Mercian kingdom, of the five or six ealdormen who may have ruled over the older kingdoms or folks that were included within it, and of some ten or a dozen thegns who probably held high offices in the royal household.

[2] See for the whole of this subject, Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. cap. vi.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egbert.

promulgation of a code of laws, the old theory of a folk-moot ratifying the decisions of the Witan and the king rose again into life, and the retinues in the train of noble and prelate represented by their shouts of "Aye, aye," the assent of the collective freemen. But such an assent was a mere survival of the past; in practice it was an empty form, and the occasions on which it was called for were rare and exceptional.[1] In ordinary times the Witenagemot was little more than a royal council, whose members were named and summoned by the king,[2] and which widened now and then into aristocratic assemblies that foreshadowed the "Great Council" of the later Baronage.

The Three Kingdoms.

That the movement towards national consolidation should have stopped so long at the creation of the Three Kingdoms is one of the problems of our early history. But as the eighth century drew to its close, the internal conditions of these states and their relations to one another showed that the long-delayed

[1] The decisions of one of Æthelstan's Witenagemots are made in common with "totâ populi generalitate." Cod. Dip. 364. But "that such gatherings shared in any way the constitutional powers of the Witan, that they were organized in any way corresponding to the machinery of the folk-moot, that they had any representative character in the modern sense as having full powers to act on behalf of constituents, that they shared the judicial work, or, except by applause and hooting, influenced the decisions of the chiefs, there is no evidence whatever."—Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 142.

[2] Æthelstan speaks of the Witan at his great meetings as "Witan whom the king himself has named." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 241.

revolution was near at hand. The most prominent cause of the break up of the political system of the Three Kingdoms was one that had already told fatally on the lesser kingships. In the earlier life of the English peoples, political individuality found its centre and representative in their royal stocks; and the number of the separate folks was shown in the number of their kings. Kent and Sussex found room for at least two in each realm; East Anglia and Wessex seem at times to have had many; there were separate royal stocks for peoples like the Hecanas and Hwiccas, or the South-Mercians and Middle-Engle. It was only through the extinction or degradation of these kingly families that national union was possible; and it is as a main step in bringing this about that the formation of the larger states during the seventh and eighth centuries is so important in our history. With the gradual extension of the Three Kingdoms the bulk of the smaller kingships disappeared.[1] Some kings lingered on for a time as under-kings; some sank into ealdormen, who drew their power from the appointment of the conquering over-lord; some, no doubt, perished altogether with the chances of time and of war.[2] But a new period began from the moment that the extinction of the royal stocks told on the Three Kingdoms themselves.

[1] Thus the Lindsey kings were extinct before 678, when their land was disputed between Mercia and Northumbria; nor do we hear of any Middle-English king after Peada. The stock of Deira ended with Oswini. The kings of Sussex are not heard of after its conquest by Ecgberht, nor those of Wight after its conquest by Ceadwalla.

[2] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 198, &c.

CHAP. I.

The England of Egbert.

Northumbria.

Northumbria was no longer the formidable kingdom which we have seen carrying its arms to the Clyde in the days of Eadberht. The withdrawal of that king to a cloister had been the close of its greatness, for after a year's reign his son Oswulf was slain by the thegns of his household,[1] and with his death peace and order seem to have come utterly to an end. Oswulf was in fact the last undisputed representative of the royal line of Bernicia. The kingly house fell with him, and from this moment a strife for the crown absorbed the whole energy of Northumbria. The throne was seized by Æthelwold Moll;[2] and a victory over his opponents at the Eildon Hills near Melrose so strengthened his power that Offa, just settled in Mercia, gave him his daughter to wife. But after six years of rule Æthelwold Moll lost his kingdom in a fight at Winchanheale in 765;[3] and his place was taken by another claimant, Alchred.[4] The history of Northumbria became from this hour a mere strife between these rivals and their houses. Alchred, victorious over two risings under ealdormen,[5] was driven in 774 to take refuge among the Picts by Æthelred, the son of Æthelwold; but after four years of strife Æthelred followed his rival into exile; and his successor, Alfwold "the son of Oswulf" interrupts for nine years, from 779 to 788, the rule of the warring houses. Alfwold's reign

[1] "Occisus. . . . â suâ familiâ," Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg. a. 758.

[2] Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg. a. 759. [3] Sim. Durh. G. R. a. 765.

[4] Alchred claimed descent from Ida through Bleacmann. Flor. Worc. a. 765; but Simeon adds "ut quidam dicunt." Gest. Reg. a. 765. Æthelwold's descent was even more doubtful: "of uncertain descent." [5] Sim Durh. Gest. Reg. a. 774.

however was as stormy as the rest. In one rising an ealdorman was "burnt" by two of his fellow-ealdormen; and in 788 another ealdorman rose and slew the king.[1] With his slaying the two houses again came to the front; for two years Alchred's son, Osred, occupied the throne; and on his flight[2] in face of a revolt of his ealdormen, the son of Æthelwold Moll, Æthelred, was again recalled to the kingdom after eleven years of exile.

Alcuin.

Æthelred shrank from no blood-shedding to secure his throne. The two children of his predecessor were drawn by false oaths from their sanctuary at York to be slain at his bidding,[3] and Osred, who was drawn by like pledges from Man, found a like doom. For a while this ruthlessness seems to have succeeded in producing some sort of peace, but the long anarchy of thirty years had left the land a mere chaos of bloodshed and misrule, and all that saved it from utter ruin was the wide extension of its ecclesiastical domains. The waste and bloodshed of its civil wars stopped short at the bounds of the vast possessions which had been granted to its churches; the privilege of sanctuary which they enjoyed gave shelter to the victims of the strife; and the learning and culture of Bæda and of Archbishop Ecgberht still found untroubled homes at Jarrow or York. Its intellectual life was thus able to go on amidst the wreck of its political life; and in the midst of the anarchy a scholar passed from the schools of Northumbria to become the literary centre of the west. Born about

[1] Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg. a. 788. [2] Sim. Durh. G. R. a. 792.
[3] Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg. a. 792.

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

735 within the walls of York, Alcuin had reached early manhood at the retirement of Eadberht from the throne.[1] He had been entrusted, like other noble youths, to Archbishop Ecgberht in his boyhood; and was placed under the schoolmaster Æthelberht who followed Ecgberht in his see on his death. In 766, when Alchred had just mounted the throne, he seems to have accompanied Æthelberht on a journey to Rome, and some time after his return himself took charge of the school of York. The years of his teaching there, from 767 to 780, were the age of its greatest fame and influence;[2] so strangely in fact was the Church isolated from the secular fortunes of the realm about it that amidst the growing anarchy of Northumbria not only scholars from every part of Britain, but even from Germany and Gaul, are said to have crowded to Alcuin's lecture-room, while his friend, Archbishop Æthelberht, was busy in building a new and more sumptuous church at York, as well as in journeys to Rome in which he could gather books for its library.

Northumbria and the Wikings.

It was on his return from a journey to get the pallium for Æthelberht's successor in 781 that Alcuin, now the most famous of European scholars, met Charles the Great at Parma, and was drawn by him from his work in Britain to the wider work of spreading intellectual life among the Franks. But

[1] For Alcuin, see article on him by Stubbs in "Dict. Christ. Biogr." vol. i. p. 73.

[2] "Eo tempore in Eboraica civitate famosus merito scholam magister Alchuinus tenebat, undecumque ad se confluentibus de magna sua scientia communicans." Vit. S. Liudgeri, quoted by Lingard, "Anglo-Saxon Church," vol. ii. p. 203.

though his home was now in a strange land, Alcuin's heart still clave to his own Northumbria. The news of its fresh disorder, and the slaying of Alfwold in 788, drew from him prayer after prayer to Charles for leave to revisit his country; and in 790, soon after the recall of Æthelred Moll to the throne, he seems to have returned to the north of Britain. If so, he must have witnessed the bloody deeds by which Æthelred strove to secure his crown; and we cannot wonder at his finding omens of ill in "that rain of blood which," as he wrote after his departure to the king, "we saw in Lent, at a time when the sky was calm and cloudless, fall from the lofty roof of the northern aisle of the church in York."[1] But he could hardly have dreamt how fatally the omen was to be fulfilled by the first descent of the northmen only a few months after his return to Gaul. Their incursion again roused civil strife. In the spring of 796 king Æthelred was slain, and whatever was now the connexion of the Northumbrian with the Frankish court, the wrath of Charles against a race whom he denounced as "murderers of their lords" was hardly allayed by Alcuin's intercession.[2] All cause of intervention however was removed by the accession of Eardwulf, who succeeded in restoring order for the next ten years;[3] but with the death of Eardwulf in 806 the northern kingdom vanishes from history till its submission to Ecgberht seventeen years later.[4]

[1] Alc. Op. (Migne), pt. i. epist. xiii.
[2] Haddan and Stubbs "Councils," iii. 498.
[3] Sim. Durh. "Gest. Reg." a. 796.
[4] In his Gesta Regum, Simeon of Durham practically ceases at

CHAP. I.

The England of Egberht.

Mercia.

Broken indeed by ceaseless strife Northumbria was ready to fall before a conqueror's sword. But no such doom seemed to threaten Mercia. In Mercia the royal stock went on unchallenged. No civil war disturbed the rule of Offa or of Cenwulf. No foreign ruler dared to threaten the Middle Kingdom as Charles had threatened the North. As the eighth century drew to its close, indeed, Mercia seemed destined rather to absorb its fellow states than to be absorbed by either of them. Northumbria was torn by anarchy. Wessex lay almost hidden from sight behind the forest-screen of the Andredsweald. All that the outer world saw of Britain was the realm of the Mercian kings. From Dover to the Ribble, from Bath to the Humber, the great mass of the island submitted to their sway; and to the Frankish court the lord of this vast domain was already "king of the English." The ability of Offa and Cenwulf as rulers, as well as the length of their reigns, heightened the impression of Mercian strength. But even at the summit of their power, a close observer might have seen the inherent weakness of the structure they had built up. The kingdom in fact was held together simply by the sword. It stretched from sea to sea; but both on the eastern and the western coast its subject-provinces only waited the hour of trial to turn against it. The Welsh of North-Wales were ready to

803; there are two ecclesiastical entries in 830 and 846, then from 849 the chronicle is for some time wholly drawn from southern sources, and without reference to the north. In his "Historia de Dunelmensi Ecclesia" there is a like gap between 793 and 867.

rise at any moment. Kent, a possession essential to the communication of Mercia with the western world, had risen against Offa and again risen against Cenwulf. The East-Anglians were now preparing to renew the strife which they had waged for centuries against the western Engle. And within Mercia itself there seems to have been little of that administrative organization which might have compensated for the hostility of its dependencies. The existence of five great ealdormen seems to point to a perpetuation of the purely local government in the provinces which made up the central realm. It was characteristic indeed of the looseness of its political structure that Mercia had no marked centre of government. Northumbria found a centre at York. Wessex recognised its royal town in Winchester. But Tamworth was simply a royal vill at which the Mercian kings dwelt more frequently than elsewhere. Mercia in fact owed its greatness wholly to the character of its individual kings. A single defeat under Æthelbald had already revealed its inherent weakness; and the same revelation was to follow its later defeat under Beorhtwulf.

Wessex.

Wessex on the other hand, smaller as was its area and later as was its developement than that of its fellow-kingdoms, had a vigour and compactness which neither of them possessed. Its military strength was really greater than theirs. From the first moment of their descent upon Britain the Gewissas had seized a region of surpassing military value. The Gwent was a natural fortress, backed by the sea, screened from attack on either side by impassable woodlands, by Selwood and the Andredsweald, and presenting along

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

its front two parallel lines of heights, whose steep escarpments rose like walls in face of any assailants. Their main settlement, Winchester, lay in the centre of this region; and a series of roads which diverged from it carried forces easily to any threatened point of the border. However Wessex might grow, the Gwent remained its heart and centre; and the inaccessibility of the Gwent was shown by its security from any inroad till the coming of the Danes. Northumbrian hosts might pour over Mid-Britain, or Mercian hosts carry their ravages over Northumbria, but neither Mercian nor Northumbrian ever appeared before Winchester. The bulk of the West-Saxon fights were fought in the district over Thames; and if invaders threatened the Gwent itself it was only, like Ceolric, to be thrown back discomfited from the steeps of Wanborough. Even Wulfhere after a great victory could penetrate no further into Wessex than the same steep of Ashdown. The varied composition of Ecgberht's kingdom, instead of proving a source of weakness, was itself a source of strength. Its centre was the older Wessex we have described, the region between the Andredsweald and the Selwood; a district of purely English blood grouped round a single political and religious centre at Winchester. To the west lay the newer Wessex, a tract which indeed found a single ecclesiastical centre in Sherborne, but where Welsh and English blood mingled in the veins of the population, and in which the ethnological character varied from the English element dominant along the skirts of Selwood to the wholly Celtic life of the western

The England of Ecgberht.

Dyvnaint. But this newer Wessex was even more West-Saxon in temper than the Wessex of the Gwent. The slowness of its conquest, the gradual settlement of the conquerors over its soil, had bound it firmly to the house of Cerdic, and utterly obliterated its Celtic traditions. And besides this, the two portions were knit together by an administrative order which was hardly known elsewhere. Our ignorance of the early history of Wessex leaves us no means of tracing the origin of this order, but in Ecgberht's day at least it was firmly established. Every folk-district in the realm was placed in the hands of a single ealdorman, an officer who by this time must have been of royal appointment, and who was above all the leader of its local force or "fyrd." It is through the mention of these officers that we see that Wessex was by this time at any rate parted into the administrative divisions that it still retains, and that the Somer-sætan, the Defn-sætan, and the Dor-sætan had their defined districts on one side the Selwood, as the settlers in the "Bearroc-wood," the Wil-sætan, and the original Gewissas in their tract about Hampton had on the other.

The Wikings and England.

It was this political and administrative superiority, even more than its military vigour, which so suddenly set Wessex at the head of the English states and gave into its hands the work of consolidating the English peoples. In Ecgberht's day, however, that work had hardly begun. Though every one of its states had submitted to his sway,[1] Ecgberht had not become a king of England. He had not

[1] See "Making of England," cap. viii. (A. S. G.)

CHAP. I.

The England of Ecgberht.

even become king of the Mercians, of the East Angles, or of the Northumbrians. It was not till Ælfred's day, a hundred years later, that a king of Wessex could call himself also king of the Mercians; it was not till Æthelstan that the ruler who was at once king of the West-Saxons and king of the Mercians could add to his title that of king of the Northumbrians. Even then the bond which united the Three Kingdoms was but the personal bond of their allegiance to the same ruler; and it was not till the close of Eadgar's reign that the genius of Dunstan dared to create an England and to crown the lord of the three realms as its national king. But these things were far off in Ecgberht's time. His conquests had given him a supremacy over his fellow-kings, by which they and their peoples were bound to pay him tribute and to follow him in war. But their life remained in all other matters as independent as before. In spite of submission and tribute Northumbria seems to have remained almost wholly detached from its over-lords. Rival claimants for its throne fought on as of old, unhindered by any interference from the south; and the successors of Ecgberht made not a single effort to rescue it from the Dane. East Anglia remained under its old line of kings, almost as isolated as Northumbria from Wessex, and equally unaided by it in the coming struggle. Mercia itself, broken as it was by defeat after defeat, was far from passing into a mere province of the West-Saxon realm; it retained its old national life as it retained its bounds; and though Ecgberht drove its king Wiglaf from his

throne, he was forced after three years of struggle to replace him on it. Even in later years it was by ties of blood and wedlock rather than by more direct bonds of subjection that the policy of Wessex strove to bring the Midland realm beneath its sway. It was in fact only by long and patient effort that this vague supremacy of the West-Saxon kings could have been developed into a national sovereignty; and the effort after such a sovereignty had hardly begun when it was suddenly broken by the coming of the Danes.

CHAPTER II.

THE COMING OF THE WIKINGS.

829—858.

The first Wikings.

In the days of Beorhtric of Wessex, while Offa was still ruling in Mercia, and Ecgberht an exile at the court of Charles, "in the year 787, came three ships" to the West-Saxon shores, "and then the reeve rode thereto, and would force them to go to the king's tun, for that he knew not what they were; and they slew folk."[1] Two hundred years later, in the midst of the long warfare which opened with the landing of the pirate-band, the memory of

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch), a. 787, which adds, "These were the first ships of Danish men that sought land of Engle-folk." Munch however ("Det Norske Folks Historie," German transl. by Claussen, pt. iv. p. 186), points out that this entry dates at earliest from 891, when the Danes were really the assailants of Britain, and that a more contemporary entry may be found in the late Canterbury Chronicle (F), where the ships are called "of Northmen from Heretha-land." "It is a strong testimony to the age of this account that the Wikings are called Northmen, for this name was lost in England earlier than elsewhere." "The so-called Heretha-land," he adds, "from which these northmen came can be none other than Hardeland or Hardesyssel, in Jutland, for from Hördeland in Norway no descents from England had taken place at this time."

that first warning of danger was still fresh in the minds of men. "Suddenly," ran the later tradition preserved in the royal West-Saxon house, "there came a Danish fleet, not very alarming, consisting of three long ships, and this was their first coming. When this came to the ears of the king's reeve, who was then in the tun which is called Dorchester, he mounted his horse and with a few men hastened to the port, thinking they were merchants rather than enemies, and addressing them with authority ordered them to be carried to the king's tun; and by them he and those who were with him were there slain. Now the name of this reeve was Beaduheard."[1] Soon there were few tun-reeves who knew not what these strangers were, for six years later, in 793, their pirate-boats were ravaging the coast of Northumbria, plundering the monastery of Lindisfarne and murdering its monks;[2] and in 794 they entered the Wear to pillage and burn the houses of Wearmouth and Jarrow. "He who can hear of this calamity," wrote Alcuin as the news reached him in Gaul of the ruin of the houses which enshrined within them the religious history of Northumbria, the houses of Aidan and Cuthberht, of Benedict Biscop and of Bæda, "he who can hear of this calamity and not cry to God on behalf of his country, has a heart not of flesh but of stone."[3]

[1] Æthelweard, a. 787. Æthelweard was a descendant of Æthelred I., and probably the ealdorman of the Western Provinces in the reign of Æthelred II.

[2] Sim. Durh. Gest. Reg. 793, 794.

[3] Alcuin Op. (Migne), pt. i. epist. xi.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

The conquest of England.

The descent of the three strange ships did in fact herald a new conquest of Britain. It was but the beginning of a strife which was to last unbroken till the final triumph of the Norman conqueror. For nearly a hundred years to come the shores of England were harried and its folk slain by successors of these northern pirates, till their scattered plunder-raids were merged in the more organized attack of the Danish sea-kings. The conquests of Ivar and Guthrum and Halfdene in the days of Ælfred were in their turn but the prelude to the bowing of all England to a foreign rule under Swein and Cnut. But in the end the fruit of the long attack slipped from Danish hands. The harvest indeed was reaped, but it was reaped by northmen who had ceased even in tongue to be northmen at all. Not the Danes of Denmark, but the Danes of Rouen, of Caen, of Bayeux, became lords of the realm of Ælfred and Eadgar. It was the sword of the Normans which drove for the last time from English shores the fleet of the Danes.

The Northern peoples.

The new assailants announced themselves as men of the north, men from the lands beyond the Baltic; but this told Englishmen nothing. Though the Jutes who had shared in the conquest of Britain had been at least akin in blood with the dwellers on either side the Cattegat, their work had soon come to an end; and with it had ended for centuries all contact of the men of the north with Englishmen. It was not till the middle of the eighth century that dim news of heathen nations across the Baltic came from English missionaries who were toiling among the Saxons of the Elbe; and an English poet,

it may be an English mission-priest in the older home of his race, wove fragments of northern sagas into his Christianized version of the song of Beowulf. But to the bulk of Englishmen as to the rest of Christendom, these peoples remained almost unknown. Their life had indeed till now been necessarily a home life; for instead of fighting and mingling with the world about them, they had had to battle for sheer existence with the stern winter, the barren soil, the stormy seas of the north. While Britain was passing through the ages of her conquest, her settlement, her religious and political reorganization, the Swede was hewing his way into the dense pine-forests that stretched like a sea of woodland between the bleak moorlands and wide lakes of his father-land;[1] the Dane was finding a home in the reaches of birch-wood and beechwood that covered the flat isles of the Baltic, and the Norwegian was winning field and farm from the steep slopes of his narrow fiords.

[1] Olaf, King Ingiald's son, went westward with his men "to a river which comes from the north and falls into the Venner Lake and is called Klar river. There they set themselves down, turned to, and cleared the woods, burned, and then settled there. . . . Now when it was told of Olaf in Sweden that he was clearing the forests, they laughed at his doings and called him the Tree-feller" (Olaf Trætelgia). Ynglinga Saga, c. 46, in Laing's translation of the "Heimskringla" ("Sea Kings of Norway"), vol. i. p. 255. So of an earlier king, Onund, "Sweden is a great forest land, and there are such great uninhabited forests in it that it is a journey of many days to cross them. Onund bestowed great pains and cost in clearing the woods and tilling the cleared land. . . . Onund had roads made through all Sweden, both over morasses and mountains: and he was therefore called Onund Road-Maker" (Braut-Anund). Ynglinga Saga, c. 37, Laing, vol. i. 247.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

820-858.

Their temper.

It was this hard struggle for life that left its stamp to the last on the temper of the Scandinavian peoples. The very might of the forces with which they battled gave a grandeur to their resistance. It was to the sense of human power that woke as the fisher-boat rode out the storm, as the hunter ploughed his lonely way through the blinding snowdrift, as the husbandman waged his dogged warfare with unkindly seasons and barren fields, that these men owed their indomitable energy, their daring self-reliance, their readiness to face overwhelming odds, their slowness to believe themselves beaten. He who would win good fame, said an old law, must hold his own against two foes and even against three; it is only from four that he may fly without shame. Courage indeed was a heritage of the whole German race, but none felt like the man of the north the glamour and enchantment of war. Fighting was the romance that alone broke the stern monotony of his life; the excitement and emotion which find a hundred spheres among men of our day found but this one sphere with him. As his boat swept out between the dark headlands at the fiord's mouth, the muscles that had been hardened by long strife with thankless toil quivered with the joy of the coming onset. A passion of delight rings through war-saga and song; there are times when the northern poetry is drunk with blood, when it reels with excitement at the crash of sword-edge through helmet and bone, at the warrior's war-shout, at the gathering heaps of dead. The fever of fight drove all ruth and pity before it. Within the

circle of his own home indeed the sternness of the life he lived did gentle work in the Wiking's heart.[1] Long winter and early nightfall gathered the household closely together round the common hearth, and nowhere did stronger ties bind husband to wife or child to father; nowhere was there a deeper reverence for womanhood and the sanctities of womanhood. But when fight had once begun, the farmer and fisher who loved his own wife and child with so tender a love became a warrior who hewed down the priest at his altar, drove mothers to slavery, tossed babes in grim sport from pike to pike.[2] The nations on whom these men were soon to swoop cowered panic-stricken before a pitilessness that seemed to them the work of madmen. "Deliver us," ran the prayer of a litany of the time, "deliver us, O Lord, from the frenzy of the Northmen!"

The Northmen and the sea.

What gave their warfare its special character was that its field was the sea. The very nature indeed of

[1] For their love of home see a touching scene in the Njal's Saga (trans. by Dasent, i. 236). Gunnar, doomed by the Thing to exile, goes down to the ship, then "he turned with his face up towards the Lithe and the homestead at Lithend, and said, "Fair is the Lithe, so fair that it has never seemed to me so fair; the corn-fields are white to harvest, and the home-mead is mown; and now I will ride back home, and not fare over sea at all."

[2] "Domos vestras combusserunt, res vestras asportarunt, pueros sursum jactatos lancearum acumine susceperunt, conjuges vestras quasdam vi oppresserunt, quasdam secum abduxerunt." Hen. Hunt. lib. v. proœm. (ed. Arnold, p. 138). A Wiking named Oelver in the ninth century is said to have been nicknamed "Barnakarl" (or child's cnecht), because he would not join in the tossing children on pikes. Munch, "Det Norske Folks Hist." (Germ. tr.), pt. iv. p. 232.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

their home-land drove these men to the sea, for in all the northern lands society was as yet but a thin fringe of life edging closely the sea-brim. In Sweden or the Danish isles rough forest-edge or dark moor-slope pressed the village fields closely to the water's edge. In Norway the bulk of the country was a vast and desolate upland of barren moor, broken only by narrow dales that widened as they neared the coasts into inlets of sea; and it was in these inlets or fiords, in the dale at the fiord's head, or by the fiord's side, where the cliff-wall now softened into slopes to which his cattle clung, now drew back to make room for thin slips of meadow-land and corn-land, that the Norwegian found his home. Inland, where the bare mountain flats then rose like islands out of a sea of wood, the country was strange and dread to them; for the boldest shrank from the dark holts and pools that broke the desolate moorland, from the huge stones that turned into giants in the mists of nightfall, giants that stalked over the fell till the grey dawn smote them into stone again, from the wolves that stole along the fearsome fen-paths, and from the fell shapes into which their excited fancy framed the mists at eventide, shapes of giant "moor-steppers," of elves and trolls, of Odin with his wind-cloak wrapped round him as he hurried over the waste. But terror and strangeness vanished with a sight of the sea. To the man of the north the sea was road and hunting-ground. It was a "water-street" between the scattered settlements; for few cared to push overland across the dark belts of moor that parted one fiord from another. Even more than

the land about his home it was the dalesmen's harvest-field, for fisher's net had often to make up for scanty corn-growth and rotting crops, and quest of whale and seal carried them far along their stormy coasts.[1]

Their usages.

The life of these northern folk was in its main features one with the life of the earlier Englishmen.[2] Their home and home customs were the same. The ranks of society differed only in name. Our ætheling, ceorl, and slave are found in the oldest tradition of the north as Jarl, Carl, and Thrall;[3] in later times Carl begat the Bonder and Jarl the King. There was as little difference in their political or judicial institutions. The bonders gathered to the Thing as the ceorls to the Moot; we see the little "folks" who in our own history so soon fuse into larger peoples in the "fylki," each with its Jarl or King, eight of which found room for themselves in the district of Trondhjem alone.[4] In religion too there was the same kinship. The gods that were common to the Teutonic race were worshipped in the northern lands as elsewhere, though nowhere among the German peoples did their story become clothed with so noble a poetry. The contrast of the warmth and

[1] See Othere's story in Ælfred's "Orosius," at the close of Pauli's "Life of Alfred," p. 249.

[2] See Munch, "Det Norske Folks Historie," Germ. trans. by Claussen, pt. ii. pp. 140—257, for the details of their life.

[3] See the curious "Rigsmaal" in Edda Samundar, iii. 170—190. Copenhagen, 1828.

[4] Saga of Harald Fairhair; Laing's "Sea-Kings of Norway" (translation of the "Heimskringla"), vol. i. p. 275. For the Fylki see Munch, "Det Norske Folks Hist." Germ. trans. pt. i. p. 126, &c.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829. 858.

peace within the home of the Scandinavian with the sternness and uproar of the winter world without it woke a wild fancy in the groups that clustered through the long eventide round the glowing wood-ashes of the hearth. Thor's mighty hammer was heard smiting in the thunder peal that rolled away over the trackless moors. Odin's mighty war-cry was heard in the wind-blast that rushed howling out to sea. The faint and brief daylight of mid-winter pointed forward to that "twilight of the gods," when even they should yield to the weird that awaited them, and the All-father himself should die.

Their warfare.

There was the same likeness in their usages of war. In both peoples the war-band lay at the root of all. The young warriors of the folk gathered round a war-leader for fight and foray; sometimes the king of this dale or that summoned his fighting-men for more serious warfare; sometimes a farmer when seed-time was over mustered his bondmen for a harvest of pillage ere the time came for harvesting his fields. To reap the one harvest was counted through the north as honest and man-worthy a deed as to reap the other.[1] But while the English war-band made its foray over land, the northern war-band made its foray over sea. From the "wik," or creek where their long-ship lurked, the "Wikings," or "creek-men,"[2] as the adventurers were called, pounced upon their prey, or

[1] See the story of Swein, Asleif's son, in the Orkneyinga Saga (tr. by Anderson), c. 72, &c., pp. 117, sq.

[2] For derivation and history of this word, see Munch, "Det Norske Folks Hist." pt. iv. p. 237 (German translation). It is used solely by voyagers to the western, never by those to the eastern seas.

crept along the iron-bound coast, striking here and there up the fiords to harry and to slay. The "long-ship" itself in its very construction was above all a pirate ship; of great length, but narrow beam and little depth of keel,[1] its admirable lines and all but flat bottom showed that it was built exclusively for speed. In rough water indeed the Wiking ships were almost unmanageable, and a storm like that off the coast of Lindisfarne in 794 threw them helpless on the beach. Nor were they adapted for long sea journeys; there was little accommodation for crew or cargo; and the pirates were forced to moor at each sunset, to make a foray for what cattle might serve for their meal, and to sleep beneath a sail on the beach. In fighting too, their slightness of construction, fastened together as their timbers often were by wattles of tree-roots for lack of iron, forbade any use of them in shock of ship against ship;[2] they were in fact lashed together, and their stern and forecastle used as platforms for their fighting crews. But they were well fitted for their special end. A heavy merchant vessel lay at the mercy of the Wiking's "keel," as it darted out from covert of

[1] The boat found recently under a mound at Gokstad in Norway is about seventy-eight feet long by sixteen and a half feet broad, and between five and six feet deep. She would draw about four feet of water, and was driven by sixteen oars on either side.

[2] The ships of the Wikings were not designed for sea fights; their main object was to serve merely as a means of transport from one field of plunder to another. See K. Maurer's review of Steenstrup's "Indledning i Normannertiden (Normannerne, Bind i.)" in the "Jenäer Literatur-zeitung," 4th series, No. 2, Jan. 13, 1877, p. 25. (A.S.G.)

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

820-858.

headland or isle, while its flat bottom and shallow draught of water made every river-mouth a haven, and every river a road into the land that the pirates lusted to pillage.

Causes of their movement to the South.

At the causes that drew these men with the close of the eighth century[1] to their attack on western Christendom we can do little more than guess; for history of the north as yet there is none.[2] It may be, as after-legend told, that the growth of population had outstripped the resources of the fiords, and the little commonwealths were forced by very hunger to drive out their younger folk.[3] It may be that the work of union which was at last to knit these commonwealths together into peoples and nations,

[1] The Scandinavian legends carry the conquests of the Northmen back to a far earlier time. But the joint evidence of the English, Irish, and Frankish chroniclers is conclusive in establishing the real date of their first attacks.

[2] Munch, in the opening of his great work, "Det Norske Folks Historie," has striven to penetrate the darkness by the help of philology, the older genealogies, &c.; but his success is far from being commensurate with his industry.

[3] Laing ("Sea Kings of Norway," i. 109) shows the impossibility of widening the little farms along the fiords, and the consequent necessity for constant emigration. It is still seen in the large number of Scandinavian emigrants to America. See Munch, "Det Norske Folks Hist." (Germ. trans.), pt. i. p. 173, and Dudo, "Exuberantes atque terram, quam incolunt, habitare non sufficientes, collecta sorte multitudine pubescentium, veterrimo ritu in externa regna extruduntur nationum, ut adquirant sibi præliando regna, quibus vivere possint pace perpetuâ" (Duchesne. Histor. Norm. p. 62). Olaf Trygvasson's Saga mentions a tradition that in case of famine all who could not feed themselves, old and sick, were slain. [Steenstrup accepts the theory of overpopulation (which he attributes to the practice of polygamy) as the cause of emigration. K. Maurer, on the other hand, argues

as well as the revolt against it, had already begun. The men of the north shared with the rest of the Teutonic family its love of freedom and self-government; but the severance of settlement from settlement by long reaches of desolate moorland gave this spirit of independence a harder and fiercer tone than elsewhere. It became a wild and passionate hatred of the subordination and obedience which wider union and a common government necessarily bring with them. No seas were too strange to traverse, no land too far to fly to, when the northman was called to bow to the rule of a common king. But the full effect of this temper was not to be felt for a hundred years, and in seeking for the causes of their action at this earlier time it is perhaps needless to look further than to the hope of plunder. What a spell the sudden disclosure of a world's wealth casts on whole peoples we know from the memories of the Spain of Charles the Fifth and the England of Elizabeth. But the expeditions of Cortes or Raleigh were only the last outbreaks of a passion which had lingered on from the very outset of human history. As soon as men gathered in village and seaport the boats of Greek pirates swarmed over the Hellenic seas. Rome in the very height of her power had to battle with pirate fleets which grew with the growing commerce of the Mediterranean. It was the wealth of the Empire, the dream of sacking her

from the account given in Landnamabok of Harald Fairhair's attempts to check emigration that the country cannot have been over-peopled. See Maurer's review of Steenstrup in "Jenäer Literatur-zeitung," Jan. 13, 1877, p. 25. (A.S.G.)]

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

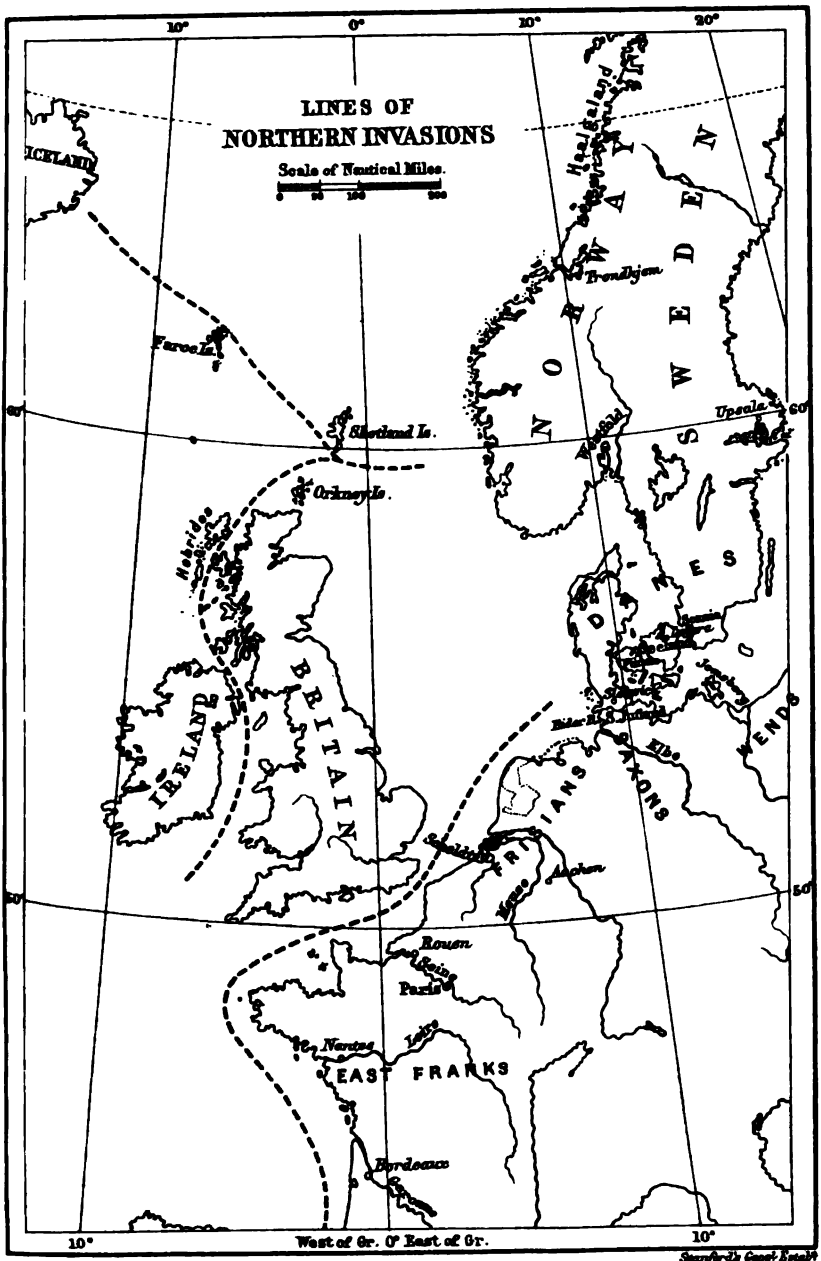
829-858.

towns and pillaging her treasures, which drew on her the German peoples in her decay. And now that the world which had reeled under that mighty shock was again organizing itself round powers which recalled the greatness as well as the name of Rome—now that commerce was covering the sea afresh with its merchant boats, and new towns rising within deserted walls, and wealth gathering once more under the shelter of church and abbey, the thirst for plunder woke again in the north. The boats which had sailed from its fiords to pillage the dales of their neighbours steered southwards for a richer spoil.

The Wikings and the Franks.

From the opening of the ninth century we see them pushing boldly to the south along two distinct lines of advance on either side of Britain, along the coast of Ireland, and along the coast of Gaul. The starting-point of the last advance was a region familiar to us as the original Engle-land,[1] but which was now known as South Jutland, and whose earlier peoples had been replaced by dwellers of Scandinavian blood. The political geography of the north was far from having taken as yet its after-shape. The kingdom of Swithiod indeed in the lands about Upsala already gave promise of the future Sweden, but only a germ of the later Norway could be seen in the little kingdom of Westfold round the Christiania fiord. Small however as this was, it had shown itself vigorous enough to set up a line of

[1] Wulfstan told Ælfred of his sail past "Jutland, Zeeland, and many islands." "In these lands," comments the King, "the Engle dwelt before they came hither to this land."—Ælfred's "Orosius," in Pauli's "Life of Alfred," p. 253.



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dependent kings in South Jutland;[1] and it was the raids of these kings along the Frankish shores that in the year 800, when his power had reached its highest point, drew Charles the Great to the northern borders of his realm. The garrisons he stationed along the coast, as well as a fleet which he ordered to be built in its harbours, showed how keen was his sense of the danger that threatened the western world. His precautions indeed were not an hour too soon. In 803, during his last struggle with the Saxons, Gudröd or Godfrid, king both of Westfold and South Jutland, advanced with a fleet as far as Sleswick, and gave shelter to the warriors who fled from the sword of the Franks. Five years later a raid of the same king across the Elbe again called the Frankish arms to the north, and Godfrid drew across the peninsula the defensive line of earthworks called the Dane-work to arrest them.

Their descents on Frisia.

So formidable indeed was this freebooter's presence that Charles was already preparing an expedition against Jutland when Godfrid himself challenged the encounter in 810 by a descent on Frisia with two hundred ships, and, making himself master of the country after three combats with its people, boasted that he would soon go and enthrone himself in the emperor's own Aachen. The danger indeed passed away as suddenly as it had risen, for the northern king was slain by one of his followers; his kingdom was broken up; and a nephew, Heming, who succeeded him in the Jutish part of it, made peace

[1] For these kings in Westfold and South Jutland, see Munch, "Det Norske Folks Historie" (Germ. trs.), pt. iv. pp. 134—154.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829. 838.

with the Franks. But even this peace, and a civil war among the northmen which followed it, did not quiet the emperor's anxiety, for on the eve of his death in the autumn of 811 we find him visiting Boulogne to see the ships whose building he had ordered the year before; and after restoring the old Roman lighthouse which served to guide ships along the coast, he made his way thence to the banks of the Scheldt, where vessels were also in process of construction. During the early part of the reign of his son, the Emperor Lewis, a continuance of the civil war among the northmen served even more than these fleets to secure the Frankish coast; and the aid of the emperor enabled Harold or Heriold, one of the claimants of the throne, again to detach Jutland from Westfold. But Harold's conversion to Christianity was at once followed by his expulsion from the land; and from this moment the old attacks were resumed as fiercely as ever, till the strife between Lewis and his sons broke down the barriers between the northmen and their prey, and the pirate-boats ravaged without hindrance from the mouth of the Elbe to the mouth of the Rhine.

The Wikings and Ireland.

It was a party of these marauders along the Frankish coast who at last pushed across the Channel to the mouth of the Thames and ravaged in 834 the Isle of Sheppey.[1] But whatever influence the advance of the Wikings along the coast of Gaul may have had on the southern or eastern states of Britain, the attention of Ecgberht himself must have been fixed even more intently on their parallel line of

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 832 (4).

advance to the west.[1] Ireland was as yet a more tempting prey for the pirates than even Gaul.[2] It was at the monasteries that these earlier raids were mainly aimed; and nowhere were the monastic houses so many and so rich. It was in these retreats indeed, sheltered as men deemed by their holiness from the greed of the spoiler, that the whole wealth of the country was stored; and the goldwork and jewelry of their shrines, their precious chalices, the silver-bound horn which king or noble dedicated at their altars, the curiously-wrought covering of their mass-books, the hoard of their treasure-chests, fired the imagination of the northern marauders as the treasures of the Incas fired that of the soldiers of Spain. News spread fast up dale and fiord how wealth such as men never dreamed of was heaped up in houses guarded only by priests and shavelings who dared not draw sword. The Wikings had long been drawing closer to this tempting prey. From the coast of Norway[3] a sail of

[1] Additional proof that the earlier attacks on southern Britain came from Ireland is given by a hoard of Anglo-Saxon coins, many of them Kentish, found at Delgany in Wicklow, to which attention has been drawn by Mr. John Evans. The latest in date are those of Beornwulf, from 820 to 824, while neither in Sweden nor Denmark have such coins been found of earlier date than 830.

[2] For the Northmen in Ireland, see especially "The War of the Gaedhill with the Gaill," ed. by Dr. Todd, 1867; and its learned Introduction.

[3] The earlier assailants of Ireland are called "White Loch lann," who are supposed to be Norwegians; the later "Danar" or Danes. But "we cannot be sure that the name 'Dane' is not sometimes given to the Norwegians." Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Intr. xxxi. Geographical considerations

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

820-858.

twenty-four hours with a fair wind brings the sailor in sight of the Shetlands;[1] Shetlands and Orkneys furnished a base for the advance of the pirates along the western shores of Britain, where they found a land like their own in the dales and lochs of Ross and Argyll, and where the names of Caithness and Sutherland tell of their conquest and settlement on the mainland; while the physical appearance of the people still records their colonization of the Hebrides.[2] Names such as that of the Orm's Head mark their entrance at last into the Irish Channel;[3] and here they had for more than thirty years been ravaging along either coast, but seeking out and plundering above all the religious houses with which Ireland was studded.

The Wikings and the Welsh.

In 832 however, but four years after the submission of all England to Ecgberht, these raids gave way to an organized invasion; for the host of a leader named Turgesius[4] or Thorgils, establishing itself at

however seem decisive as to the starting-point of the attack on the Isles and Ireland.

[1] Munch, "Det Norske Folks Hist." (Germ. trans.) pt. iv. p. 212.

[2] Worsaae, "The Danes and Northmen," sec. ix.

[3] The "Annals of Ulster" note their first appearance in 794 (really 795), "The burning of Rechru by the Gentiles, and its shrines were broken and plundered." Rechru is probably Lambay Island. From a passage in Caradoc of Lancarvan, this would seem to have been after their defeat in a descent on Glamorgan. Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Intr. xxxii.-iii.

[4] Snorro's Saga of Harald Fairhair (Laing's "Heimskringla," vol. i. p. 304) makes this Thorgils a son of Harald, sent by him to Ireland. But Harald did not begin his reign till thirty years later; and was then but a boy of ten years old.

Armagh, levied tribute from all the north of Ireland. What must have given its main import to this settlement in Ecgberht's eyes was the fact that it brought with it a revival of the struggle with the Welsh. His conquest of Cornwall had seemed the last blow in a strife of more than four hundred years; but the blow was hardly struck when the action of the northmen in the Irish seas roused the West-Welsh to fresh hopes of freedom. The scanty traces of their presence show that the pirates attempted little in the way of settlement on the eastern shores of the Irish Channel; there was little indeed to tempt them in the wild Bret-land. But behind it lay the richer land of the Engle; and soon it was not as foes but as friends that they were offering themselves to the Welsh for a raid on their common enemy. Such an offer could not fail to find a response; and thus after encountering with varied fortunes the first stray descents upon his coasts, the West-Saxon king found himself face to face with a rising of the newly-won land across the Tamar,[1] backed by armed aid from the northmen. All Cornwall must have risen; for it was at a spot but a few miles from its border that Ecgberht met the forces of the league, on a lift of dreary granitic upland just westward of its boundary, the Tamar, the heights that bear the name of Hengest-dūn. But victory was still true to the king; Cornwall was again recovered; and the fight won rest for his own West-Saxon land from the northern

[1] Cornwall had been conquered by Ecgberht in 823. See "Making of England," p. 432. (A.S.G.)

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

Political organization of Wessex.

marauders through the last two years of Ecgberht's reign.[1]

But if the pirate descents failed to loose Ecgberht's hold upon the west, they had a far more momentous result in arresting at its very outset his work of consolidating the English peoples themselves. This work, it must be remembered, had hardly begun. That the vague supremacy which Ecgberht claimed might have been developed into a real national sovereignty by after efforts of the West-Saxon kings is indeed likely enough, if we compare the real strength of Wessex with that of its rival states. But with the coming of the Danes all effort after such a sovereignty was suddenly brought to an end; and the energy of Wessex had from that moment to be concentrated on the task of self-defence. We have seen the strength which Ecgberht's kingdom drew from the physical characteristics and varied composition of the older and the newer Wessex that lay on either side of Selwood. But the power

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 835-(7). In our own English chronicles "Dena" or Dane is used as the common term for all the Scandinavian invaders of Britain, though not including the Swedes, who took no part in the attack, while Northman generally means "man of Norway." Asser however uses the words as synonymous, "Nordmanni sive Dani." Across the channel "Northman" was the general name for the pirates, and "Dane" would usually mean a pirate from Denmark. The distinction however is partly a chronological one; as, owing to the late appearance of the Danes in the middle of the ninth century, and the prominent part they then took in the general Wiking movement, their name tended from that time to narrow the area of the earlier term of "Nordmanni." See Munch, "Det Norske Folks Historie" (Germ. trans.), pt. iv. pp. 135—137.

of the West-Saxon ruler stretched beyond the bounds of Wessex, where eastward of the Andredsweald the so-called "Eastern Kingdom" grouped itself round the centre of Kent. Subject as it was to Ecgberht, Kent still retained something of its older greatness; and the existence of the Primate alone would have hindered it from sinking into a mere dependency of Wessex. Nor did it look upon itself as a conquered country or as linked to Wessex simply by the sword; for Ecgberht claimed to be nearest in blood to the house of Hengest, and to be thus as fully hereditary king of Kent as he was of Wessex. The two kingdoms therefore were united, not by a subordination of one to the other, but by their obedience to a common king. Such a relation made it possible to solve the problem of the government of Kent by setting over it as under-king the elder among the sons of the king of Wessex, and by grouping about it Essex, Surrey, and Sussex, to form a realm which bore the name of the Eastern Kingdom.[1]

Its military organization.

Differences so marked as those which existed between the three divisions of Wessex might well have imperilled its political unity; what they actually did was to triple its military strength. We shall see the Danes conquering Northumbria or Mercia in a single campaign. But to conquer Wessex required a threefold effort. When the pirates, after years of ravage, had practically torn from it the Eastern

[1] Charter of Ecgberht, 823; "filii nostri Æthelwulfi, quem regem constituimus in Cantiâ" (Thorpe, "Diplomatarium," p. 66). Æthelwulf's own charter to Chertsey (ib. p. 78) shows that Kent here means the whole Eastern Kingdom.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

820-855.

Kingdom, Wessex itself faced the invaders behind the Andredsweald; and even when the older realm had at last been overrun, a West-Saxon king could still fall back on the Wessex beyond Selwood. And to this natural strength was added the strength of a distinct military organization. The fyrd of each folk-district was placed in the hands of an ealdorman appointed by the king; nor was this arrangement confined to Wessex itself, for in each part of the "Eastern Kingdom" also we find an ealdorman acting side by side with the under-king.[1] The military value of this organization was soon seen in the freedom and elasticity which it gave to the later resistance against the Danes.

Position of the Church.

But Ecgberht was far from relying only on his warlike resources. In his attitude towards the Church he followed no doubt the example of the Frankish kings. From the earlier Pippin to Charles the Great the rulers of the Franks had striven to raise the social and political importance of the clergy. Within their older dominions they looked upon prelate and priest as the main elements of social order and intellectual progress; in their newer conquests they planted religious foundations as centres of a new civilization. Motives of hardly less weight would in any case have forced the same policy on Ecgberht. In the realms which his sword had begun to build up into a new England the Church was the one power which he found unbroken. The anarchy of each kingdom within itself, the strife of one kingdom with another, had only served to give the

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 853.

priesthood a new political weight. In countries where the German invaders found Christianity already established, and bowed to its supremacy, the bishop, enthroned in his Roman town and representing the Roman population in its attitude towards the conqueror, had from the first taken a separate political position which strengthened into temporal princedom as time went on. But great as such a position seemed, it in fact brought him to the level of the secular nobles about him. Like them he became necessarily embroiled in civil strife; like them he was the sport of ill-fortune as of good; and ill-fortune meant in his case, as in theirs, exile or deposition or death. But an English bishop was from the first one in blood and interest with the whole of his English flock. His diocese was the kingdom. His bishop's seat was the king's town. He sate beside king or ealdorman in folkmoot or witenagemot. His position was as national as theirs; but it had in it an element of permanence which their position lacked. At the close of the eighth century, while kings were being set aside and ealdormen slain, the bishop, drawn by no personal interest into the strife of warring factions, rested unharmed in his bishop's chair. In realms like Kent, where the civil organization broke utterly down, its ruin only added fresh greatness to the spiritual organization beside it. The weakness of the later kings of Hengest's race, their wreck in the struggle of Wessex and Mercia for the Kentish kingdom, raised the Archbishops of Canterbury into a power with which rulers like Offa and Cenwulf were forced to reckon.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

Ecgberht's ecclesiastical policy.

The policy of the Mercian kings had been one of jealousy of this new power and influence of the Church. Ecgberht on the other hand, like the Frank sovereigns in whose court he learned the art of rule, seized on the priesthood as allies and co-operators in the work he had to do. His earlier work of national consolidation indeed was a work which the Church had been doing ever since the days of Theodore. Its synods were the first national gatherings; its canons the first national laws; its bishops, chosen as they often were with little regard to their local origin, were the first national officers. The national character of the Church rose into yet greater prominence as the hopes of political union died away; and from the defeat of Æthelbald to Ecgberht's day the ecclesiastical body remained the one power that struggled against the separatist tendencies of the English states and preserved some faint shadow of national union. That Ecgberht should seek its aid in his work of consolidation and order would in any case therefore have been natural enough.[1] But the inroads of the Wikings supplied a yet stronger ground of union between the Church and the new kingdom. Each suddenly found itself confronted by a common enemy. The foe that threatened ruin to the political organization of England threatened ruin to its religious organization as well. In the attack of the northern peoples, heathendom seemed to fling itself in a last desperate rally on the Christian world. Thor and Odin were arrayed against Christ. Abbey

[1] For Ecgberht's attitude to the Church, see Stubbs's "Constit. Hist." vol. i. p. 269.

and minster were the special objects of the pirates' plunder. Priests were slain at the altar, and nuns driven scared from their quiet cells. Library and scriptorium, costly manuscript and delicate carving, blazed in the same pitiless fire. It was not the mere kingdom of Ecgberht, it was religion and learning and art whose very existence was at stake. It was a common danger therefore that drew Church and State together into a union closer than had been seen before. In 838 Ecgberht promised lasting peace and protection to the see of Canterbury, and received from Archbishop Ceolnoth a pledge of firm and unshaken friendship from henceforth for ever.[1] Like pledges were given and taken from Winchester, and, as we may believe, from the rest of the English Churches.

Æthelwulf.

This alliance was the last political act of Ecgberht's reign, but its results were felt as soon as his son Æthelwulf mounted the throne in the year which followed it, 839; and the energetic attitude of such a bishop as Ealhstan of Sherborne, the political influence of Bishop Swithun of Winchester, mark the new part which the Church was henceforth to play in English affairs. As bishop of the royal city of Winchester Swithun was naturally drawn close to the throne; and throughout Æthelwulf's days he seems to have acted as the king's counsellor.[2] But Æthelwulf was far from being the mere tool of his minister. To the charges made in later times against the son of Ecgberht the actual history of his reign gives little countenance. He

[1] Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," iii. 617.

[2] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. p. 151.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

is reproached with weakness and inactivity, with an unwarlike temper, and with an excessive devotion to the Church. But it is hard to see any want of energy in the king's actual conduct. His steady fight with the Danes, as well as the crowning victory which foiled their heaviest attack at Aclea, show his worth as a warrior; while the firmness with which he carried out Ecgberht's policy at home and his effort to organize a common European resistance to the northern marauders show his capacity as a statesman.

The Wikings attack Wessex.

Æthelwulf had hardly mounted the throne when he had to meet the foe whom his father's sword had driven for a brief space from the land, for not even such a victory as Hengest-dun could long check the attack of the pirates who were cruising in ever growing numbers over the Irish Sea. Their successes, as we have seen, had now given them a base of operations in Ireland itself, the north of which seemed passing into the hands of the Wikings.[1] Undisputed master of Ulster, Thorgils dealt a heavy blow at the religion and civilization of the island by the destruction of Armagh, and pressed hard upon Meath and Connaught. Meanwhile, scattered squadrons were seizing point after point along the shore, raising forts and planting colonies to which Ireland owed the rise of its earliest towns, for Dublin, Waterford, Limerick, and Cork, all sprang from pirate settlements.[2] It

[1] For the character of Thorgils' settlement, see Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Intr. p. xlviii.

[2] "It was in 837 or 838 that Dublin was first taken by the foreigners, who erected a fortress there in 841 or 842." Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Introd. p. liii.

was thus from a land that seemed all but their own that the Ostmen, as the Wikings were called in these parts, could direct their attacks against the unharried country across St. George's Channel. But they found a vigorous and well organized resistance. In 837 an attack on the very heart of the realm was repulsed by the fyrd of Hamton-shire under ealdorman Wulfheard.[1] The bulk of the pirate raids however were as yet directed against the country to the west beyond Selwood, the district which from its half Celtic population was known as that of the Wealh-cyn, and where, in spite of the failure of the Cornwealas in their revolt against Ecgberht, they might still hope for aid from the western Welsh. Here however the local fyrds fought as resolutely as in Hamton-shire. In the very year of Wulfheard's success ealdorman Æthelhelm at the head of the Dorset-folk fell beaten after a well-fought struggle with a pirate force which landed at Portland;[2] and three years later King Æthelwulf was himself defeated in an encounter with thirty-five pirate ships at their old landing place of Charmouth;[3] but in 845 the fyrds of Somerset and Dorset, with their ealdormen and their bishop Ealhstan at their head, repulsed the invaders with heavy loss at the mouth of the Parret, and six years later they were driven back with slaughter by the fyrd and ealdorman of Devon.[4]

The Wikings in Frankland.

The stout fighting of the men of Wessex was no doubt aided by a sudden weakening in the position

[1] *Eng.* Chron. (Winch.) a. 837.
[2] *Ibid.* 837.
[3] *Ibid.* 840.
[4] *Ibid.* 845, 851.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

of their assailants; for in the year of Bishop Ealhstan's victory at the Parret, Thorgils was slain in a rising of the Irish tribes of the north,[1] and his host driven from the land, while the Ostmen of the coast wasted their strength in bitter warfare between the older settlers and fresh comers from the northern lands.[2] But whether from her own resistance or the weakness of her foes, Wessex at last gained a breathing-space in the struggle: and for twenty years to come only a single descent on her coast disturbed the peace which she had won. The cessation of the strife in one quarter, however, was but the signal for its outbreak in another. The Wikings, as we have seen, had pushed forward from their home in two parallel lines of advance, one, mainly from Norway, by the Shetlands and the Hebrides along the coast of Ireland, the other, mainly from South Jutland, along the coast of Friesland and of Gaul. The last had till now found a formidable barrier in the resistance of the empire. But the wars which broke out only a few years after Æthelwulf's accession between the sons of Lewis the Pious threw open Frank-land to the pirates' arms; and after pushing up the Seine and the Loire to the sack of Rouen and Nantes they reached the Garonne in 844, and wrecked its country as far as Toulouse. In 845 a mighty host crowned the work of havoc by the sack of Paris; and with fresh fire thus added to their

[1] See for date Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Intr. xliii.

[2] According to the "Annals of Ulster," the "Dubhgael," Black Gentiles, or Danes, first came to Ireland in 851, and their coming was at once followed by a great battle with the "Fingalla," or Norwegians. Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Intr. lxxviii.

greed, fleet after fleet poured along the coast of Gaul. Their aid roused the Bretons into revolt; while victories over the troops of the Franks gave Saintes and Limoges to pillage. The pirate raids threatened to take the form of permanent conquests. One host settled down in Friesland; another seized the district between the Scheldt and the Meuse; the fleets which pillaged along the Seine and the Loire began to winter boldly in the islands of the two rivers; while in 848 a pirate force mastered the town of Bordeaux and made it a place of arms. From this hour the Wikings were masters of western Frankland, moving with little resistance from river to river, and gathering booty at their will.

They attack Kent.

It may have been the very success of their work, however, on the one side of the Channel that had hindered them as yet from undertaking any very serious work on the other. From the outset of Æthelwulf's reign, indeed, their presence had been felt on the eastern coast of Britain; in 838 we hear of descents on Lindsey and East Anglia;[1] and in spite of the silence of our annals these descents were probably often repeated through the years that followed. On Kent naturally their attacks fell more frequently. Nowhere in Britain was there a more tempting field for the spoiler. Its early civilization, its importance as the road of communication with the Continent, made Kent one of the wealthiest and most thriving parts of Britain; its bounds were steadily enlarging as the Kentishmen cleared their way into the skirts of the Weald, and rescued from

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch), a. 838.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

800-858.

the woodland the fertile tract along the upper Medway; and if the silting up of the Wantsum had closed the harbour of Richborough, the growing trade with Gaul had but passed to Dover and to Sandwich.[1] The central borough of Kent, Canterbury, was in size and wealth among the greatest of English cities; and it was the seat of a Primacy which the suppression of that of Lichfield left without a rival in southern Britain. What was yet more important in the pirates' eyes was the wealth of its religious houses. Half Thanet belonged to the abbey at Minster; while the estates of the two monasteries at Canterbury were scattered over the whole face of the shire.

The victory at Aclea.

While Æthelwulf guarded Wessex, it was here that his son Æthelstan met the assailants of his kingdom in the east. In 838 the same force which ravaged Lindsey and East Anglia slew ealdorman Herebriht and many with him in a descent on the flats of the Mersc-wara, and harried and slew in Kent itself.[2] In the next year, after a raid on Canterbury, the pirates pushed up the Thames to London and Rochester.[3] Then for a while the land had rest, till in 851 the under-king and ealdorman of Kent repulsed a raid upon Sandwich, and even captured nine of the pirate ships. The squadron, however, which they thus beat off was only the advance guard of a host which was now preparing for an attack; and in the course of the same year a fleet of three hundred and fifty

[1] This must have been very early; as Dover was already a port in Ealdhelm's day, and Sandwich in Wilfrid's.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 838. [3] *Ibid.* 839.

pirate vessels, starting, as it would seem, from the settlement which had been made in the island of Betau, moored at the mouth of the Thames,[1] sacked Canterbury, pillaged London in spite of the efforts of the Mercian king, Beorhtwulf, who advanced to oppose them, and pushed through Surrey into the heart of Britain. Here however Æthelwulf, summoned at last to his aid by the Kentish king, threw himself across their path; and a long and stubborn fight at Aclea ended in the defeat of the marauders. More pirates fell on the field, boasted the conquerors, than had ever fallen on English ground before; and the completeness of the repulse was seen in the withdrawal of the host to its old field of plunder across the Channel. But the Wikings were far from any thought of abandoning their prey. Two years later two ealdormen, at the head of the fyrds of Kent and Surrey, fell after a well-fought fight with a host in Thanet;[2] while in 855 the pirates encamped for the whole winter in the Isle of Sheppey.

Conquest of the North Welsh.

What was needed to shake off this persistent attack of the Wikings from Gaul was, as Æthelwulf saw, the alliance and co-operation of the Frankish king who was struggling against them in Gaul itself. If the first result of the pirate storm had been to further English unity by allying the new English state with the English Church, its second result was to force the state into closer relations with its fellow states of Christendom. At the beginning of his reign Æthelwulf had opened communications with the Emperor

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 851. [2] *Ibid.* a. 853.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

Lewis the Gentle for common action in meeting the common danger; but it is in his later years that we see the first distinct announcement of an international policy, the first English recognition of a common interest among the western nations, in the resolve of the king to cross the seas for counsel and concert with Charles the Bald. Work, however, had to be done before he could quit the realm.[1] On both sides of the Channel, as we have seen, the appearance of the foe from the north had given a signal for the uprising of the Celt; and while in Gaul the Bretons had shaken off the yoke of Charles the Bald and set up again a Breton kingdom under Breton kings, in Britain the West-Welsh had risen against their West-Saxon overlords, and the North-Welsh had thrown off the Mercian supremacy. So formidable indeed was the last revolt that in 853, two years after the battle of Aclea, the Mercian king Burhred, Beorhtwulf's successor, was forced to appeal to his West-Saxon overlord for aid; and it was only a march of their joint forces into the heart of North Wales, with the conquest of Anglesea, that forced the Welsh ruler, Roderic Mawr, again to own the English supremacy and to pay tribute to Mercia.

In spite of the wintering of a pirate force in Sheppey, the two triumphs of Æthelwulf in Surrey

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 853; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 6. One part of Æthelwulf's preparation was the grant of a sixth part of the rents from his private dominions for ecclesiastical and charitable purposes (Asser, ed. Wise, p. 8). By an early fraud this was represented as a grant of a tenth of the whole revenue of the kingdom, and as the legal origin of tithes. See Kemble, "Saxons in England," ii. 480—490.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

Æthelwulf's visit to Charles the Bald.

and in Wales left Britain sufficiently tranquil in 854 to suffer him to leave its shores. His first journey however recalls to us how much more the danger from the marauders seemed to men of that day a religious than a political one. He undertook a pilgrimage to Rome. We know little of the pilgrimage or of his stay at the imperial city, though it lasted a whole year and cannot but have served to draw closer the connexion of the English Church with the Mother-Church from which it sprang. From Rome however he passed at length to the court of the Franks. Blow after blow had shattered the Frankish state since Ecgberht half a century earlier quitted Charles the Great to seek his throne in Wessex. The vast realm had been torn to pieces by the dissensions of its rulers, as well as by the revival of national spirit among the peoples out of whom it had been built up. A ring of enemies had gathered round it on every border. Sclaves and Magyars pressed on its German frontier. The Saracens wasted Italy. The northmen carried fire and sword over western Frankland, the country west of the Meuse and the Rhone, a fragment of the old Frank realm which had fallen in the strife that followed the death of Lewis the Gentle to his youngest son, Charles the Bald. The reign of Charles had as yet been one of terrible misfortunes; for brave and active as he was, his vigour spent itself fruitlessly on the crowd of foes who surrounded him, on the rising of the Breton, the revolt of Gascony, the strife of his own house for rule, the never-ceasing forays of the northmen. Beaten and baffled as he seemed how-

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

ever, Charles fought on; and the struggle of the harassed king, if it failed to save his own realm, did somewhat to save Æthelwulf's. The visit of Æthelwulf to the Frankish court, where he spent three months in the summer of 856, was a recognition of their common work; and his marriage with the Frank king's young daughter, Judith, with which the visit closed, marks probably the conclusion of a formal alliance, perhaps of a common plan of operations with Charles the Bald.[1]

Æthelwulf's return and death.

But the policy of Æthelwulf was in advance of his age. England had hardly as yet realized the need of national unity, and outside the king's council chamber there can have been few who understood the need of union between the nations of Christendom. The descents of the Wikings had as yet with a single exception been but isolated plunder-raids, and their very success against the invaders would help to blind Englishmen to a sense of their danger. The new connexion with the Frankish king, on the other hand, may have roused suspicions of a plan for setting aside the elder sons of Æthelwulf in favour of the issue of his marriage with Judith; and if such suspicions were once aroused, they would be quickened by the coronation of the queen, a ceremony which was

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 855; Prudent. Trec. Ann. a. 856 (ap. Pertz. i. 450), who dates the betrothal in July, the marriage at Verberie on the Oise on Oct. 1, says that Hincmar, "imposito capiti ejus diademate reginæ nomine insignit, quod sibi suæque genti eatenus fuerat insuetum." The marriage can have only been a formal one, as Judith was but twelve years old. The marriage of Judith to Æthelbald, on his father's death, had no doubt the same purely political meaning.

as yet against the wont of the West Saxons.[1] Whatever was the cause of the rising, on his return at the close of 856 Æthelwulf found Wessex in arms. In a gathering at Selwood[2] its thegns had pledged themselves to place the king's eldest living son, Æthelbald, who on the death of his brother Æthelstan a few years back had succeeded him in charge of the Eastern Kingdom, on the throne of Wessex, and their course was backed by Bishop Ealhstan of Sherborne. Swithun, on the other hand, remained true to Æthelwulf, and the Kentishmen welcomed him back to their shores. But Æthelwulf had no mind for civil strife. He was already drawing fast to the grave, and if we judge his conduct by the past history of his reign, rather than by the charges of weakness which later tradition brought against him, we may see in his summons of a Witenagemot to settle this question, the reluctance of a noble ruler to purchase power for himself by again rending England asunder in face of the foe. The voice of the Witan bade

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 9.; Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 169. At some time before Æthelwulf's journey the question of the succession had been settled in a somewhat peculiar way. His next successor would naturally be his eldest son, the "Eastern King," Æthelstan; but, whether from the failing health which the death of Æthelstan soon after may indicate or no, it seems to have been needful to look further, and to arrange that the crown should pass at his death to his three brothers successively in the order of their birth, setting aside the children of all of them. Æthelstan died before his father's return; and the next son, Æthelbald, may have looked on the alleged coronation of his youngest brother Ælfred at Rome, or on the marriage with Judith, as threatening his right of succession under this arrangement.

[2] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 8.

CHAP. II.

The Coming of the Wikings.

829-858.

Æthelwulf content himself with the Eastern Kingdom; and abandoning Wessex to Æthelbald, the king dwelt quietly in this under-realm for the brief space of life which still was left him.[1]

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 170; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 9.

CHAPTER III.

THE MAKING OF THE DANELAW.

858—878.

The final attack on Britain.

A FEW months after his withdrawal to the Eastern realm brought Æthelwulf to the grave at the opening of 858;[1] and Æthelbald enjoyed but for two years longer the crown which revolt had given him. The reign of his brother Æthelberht,[2] who followed him in 860, was almost as short and uneventful; and for some years there was little to break the peace of the land save a raid of the northmen on Winchester,[3] which was avenged by the men

[1] "Idibus Januarii," Prud. Trec. Ann. a. 858, (ap. Pertz. i. 451.)

[2] By Æthelwulf's will Æthelberht, who succeeded him as under-king in Kent, should have remained there at Æthelbald's death, while Wessex fell to his younger brother Æthelred; but the will must have been set aside by the Witan as inconsistent with the arrangement by which the brothers were to follow one another in order of age. Both the bequest and the setting aside are of the highest import for our after history; the first as the earliest known instance of a claim to "bequeath" the crown as a personal property, the second as showing such a claim to be as yet not admitted.

[3] This was under Weland, whom we find before and after

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

of Hamptonshire and Berkshire under their ealdormen,[1] and a ravaging of the eastern shores of Kent by pirates from Gaul in 864. But with the death of Æthelberht and the accession of his next surviving brother Æthelred in 866, the northern storm broke with far other force upon Britain.[2] Its occupation had now indeed become almost a necessity for the Wikings. It was the one measure which could draw their other conquests together. They already occupied the Færoes and the Shetlands, the Orkney isles and the Hebrides. On either side of Britain they were a settled power. The west coast of Ireland was dotted with their towns, while eastward their settlements formed a broken line from Friesland to Bordeaux. But in the very heart of their field of operations Britain still lay unconquered, for their descents on its shores had only ended as yet in hard fighting and defeat. And yet it was the winning of Britain which was needed above all to support and widen their conquests to the eastward and westward of it. Had the pirates once become masters of this central post the face of the west must have changed. Backed by a Scandinavian Britain, their isolated colonies along the Irish coast must have widened into a dominion over all Ireland, while their

this in the Seine and the Somme. Munch, "Det Norske Folks Hist." pt. iv. pp. 200, 209-10.

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 860.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 866. Æthelred's accession marks a new step forward in the consolidation of Wessex. Kent and its dependencies are no longer left detached as a separate under-kingdom; and the king's younger brother Ælfred, who would otherwise have succeeded to the Kentish under-kingdom, becomes "Secundarius" (Asser, ed. Wise, pp. 19, 22).

settlement along the Frankish coast might have grown into a territory stretching over much of Gaul. In a word, Christendom would have seen the rise of a power upon its border which might have changed the fortunes of the western world. Such political considerations indeed can hardly have affected any save the leaders of the northern warriors, but for every warrior there was the ceaseless pressure of the pirates' greed.[1] Now that its abbeys were wrecked there was little booty to be got from Ireland; and even Gaul, wasted as it had been for half a century, was ceasing to be a prey worth much fighting for. Britain however still lay practically untouched. No spoiler's hand had fallen on most of its greater monasteries. No pirate's hand had as yet wrung ransom from its royal hoards. From the opening of Æthelred's reign therefore Britain became the main field of northern attack.

The coming of the Danes.

The name, however, under which its assailants were known suggests that a reason for the choice of this new field of warfare, even more powerful than greed or ambition, lay in the appearance of a new body of assailants.[2] It is now that we first hear of the Danes. The assailants of the Franks had been drawn, as we have seen, from the northmen of South Jutland, those of Ireland from the northmen of Norway. But while these earlier Wikings were doing their work on either side of Britain, another people of

[1] Hen. Huntingdon, "Hist. Angl." lib. v. procem. (ed. Arnold, p. 138) puts this well. "Daci vero terram . . . . non obtinere sed prædari studebant, et omnia destruere, non dominari cupiebant."

[2] See Dahlmann, "Gesch. von Dannemark," i. p. 65.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

868-878.

the same Scandinavian blood had been taking form along the south-western coast of the present Sweden, and had spread from thence over Zeeland with its fellow isles and the north of our Jutland.[1] These were the men who now came to the front under the name of the Danes; and that they brought a new force and a more national life to the struggle is plain from the character which it immediately took. The petty squadrons which had till now harassed the coast of Britain made way for hosts larger than had fallen on any country in the west; while raid and foray were replaced by the regular campaigns of armies who marched to conquer, and whose aim was to settle on the land they had won.

Character of their warfare.

The numbers in which the Danes drew together showed their consciousness that the work they were taking in hand was work such as the pirates had never taken in hand before. But their numbers are far from explaining the rapidity and completeness of their success in the coming strife. The real force of the northern warriors in fact everywhere lay not in numbers but in their superiority as soldiers to the men they met. As assailants indeed their natural advantages were great; for their mastery of the sea gave them along every coast a secure basis of operations, while every river furnished a road for their advance.[2] But the caution and audacity with which

[1] From Othere's voyage (in Ælfred's "Orosius") which is our earliest historical authority, it is clear that the Danes had reached these limits before the close of the ninth century.

[2] It is possible that the boats which may be seen making up the Humber with the tide to Goole and the Trent, and which are still known as "keels," may fairly represent to us "keels" of

they availed themselves of these advantages showed a natural genius for war. To seize a headland or a slip of land at a river mouth, to draw a trench across it and back their trench with earthworks, to haul up their vessels within this camp and assign it a camp-guard, was the prelude to each northern foray; and it was only when their line of retreat was secured that they pushed into the heart of the land.[1] From the moment of their advance caution seemed exchanged for a reckless daring. But their daring was far from being reckless. They were in fact the first European warriors who realized the value of quick movement in war. The earliest work of the marauders was to seize horses; once mounted, they rode pillaging into the heart of the land; and the speed with which they hurried along baffled all existing means of defence. While alarm beacons were flaming out on hill and headland, while shire-reeve and town-reeve were mustering men for the fyrd, the Dane had already swooped upon abbey and grange. When the shire-host was fairly mustered the foe was back within his

earlier times. Their large, red-brown sails, about seventy feet long, are but a few feet shorter than that of the Wikings' ship of Gokstad; sails of that kind rising above the fringe of reeds and over the long reaches of marsh-land must often have struck terror into the dwellers on the Humbrian shores. (A.S.G.)

[1] In their own land, which was penetrated throughout by arms of the sea, no spot lay more than ten miles from the water, and the whole country was thus necessarily exposed to pirate raids, such as those of the Wendish sea-rovers who for a time made a part of the coast of Jutland a mere desert. It was under these conditions that the Danes had learned their special mode of warfare. See Dahlmann's "Geschichte von Dannemark," vol. i., pp. 129, 136. (A.S.G.)

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

camp; and the country folk wasted their valour upon entrenchments which held them easily at bay till the black boats were shoved off to sea again. Nor was this all. The Danes were as superior to their opponents in tactics as in strategy. An encounter between the shire-levies and the pirates was a struggle of militia with regular soldiers. The Scandinavian war-band was a band of drilled warriors, tried in a hundred forays, knit together by discipline and mutual trust, grouped round a leader of their own choosing, and armed from head to foot. Outnumber them as they might, a host of farmers hurried from their ploughs, armed with what weapons each found to hand, were no match for soldiers such as these.

The Danes in Ireland.

It was now nearly fourteen years since the Danes had appeared in the western seas. In 852 a force of these "Dubhgaill" or Dark Strangers made its way to the Irish coast under a sea-king called Olaf the Fair, himself no Dane, but a son of one of the petty rulers of the Norwegian Upland;[1] and after hard fighting with the "Finn-Gaill" or White Strangers, the Norwegians whom it found in possession of the pirate field, the Danes withdrew to return four years after in overwhelming force. From 856 the Wikings about Ireland submitted to Olaf, and his occupation of Dublin made it the centre of the Ostmen.[2] At the same time Ivar the Boneless, who, whether a son of the

[1] The Landnama Book calls him a son of King Ingialld, who came of the stock of Halfdan Whitefoot, King of Upland.

[2] Todd, "War of Gaedhill and Gaill," Intr. p. lxxviii.-ix. "Ostmen" was the name given to the pirates settled on the east coast of Ireland. (A.S.G.)

mysterious Ragnar Lodbrok or no, was a Skioldung, or of the kingly race among the Danes, seems from the Irish annals to have been fighting in Munster. But for ten years we see nothing more of these leaders or of their Danish followers; and it is not till 866 that we find them united in an attack on the greater island of Britain. While the Ostmen gathered in a fleet of two hundred vessels under Olaf the Fair, and threw themselves on the Scot-kingdom across the Firth of Forth, a Danish host from Scandinavia itself, under Ivar the Boneless, landed in 866 on the shores of East-Anglia.[1] We can hardly doubt that this district had been the object of many attacks since the raid on its shores which is recorded more than twenty years before,[2] for the Danes were suffered to winter within its bounds, and it was only in the spring of 867 that they horsed themselves and rode for the north.

The Danes in York.

Their aim was Northumbria; and as they struck over Mid-Britain for York they found the country torn by the wonted anarchy, and two rivals contending, as of old, for the throne. Though the claimants united in presence of this common danger, their union

[1] The English Chronicle calls it a "micel here," but namês no leader. Æthelweard however calls it "classis tyranni Igwares;" and the Chronicle names Inguar and his brother Hubba as leaders of the "here" when it conquered East-Anglia four years later. The lists of after writers are made up of all the names mentioned in the subsequent story. I have omitted all reference to the legend of Ragnar Lodbrok's death, which does not make its appearance for a couple of centuries.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 838.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

came too late.[1] The Danes had seized York at their first arrival, and now fell back before the Northumbrian host to shelter within its defences, which seem still to have consisted of a wooden stockade crowning the mound raised by the last Roman burghers round their widened city.[2] The flight and seeming panic of their foes roused the temper of the Northumbrians: they succeeded in breaking through the stockade, and pouring in with its flying defenders, were already masters of the bulk of the town when the Danes turned in a rally of despair. From that moment the day was lost. Not only were the two kings slain, but their men were hunted and cut down over all the country-side, till it seemed as if the whole host of Northumbria lay on the fatal field.[3] So overwhelming was the blow that a general terror hindered all further resistance; those who survived the fight "made peace with the Pagans;" and Northumbria sank without further struggle into a tributary kingdom of the Dane.

Ruin of Northumbria.

But the loss of its freedom was only the first result of this terrible overthrow. With freedom went the whole learning and civilization of the North. These, as we have seen, were concentrated in the great abbeys which broke the long wastes from the Humber to the Forth, and whose broad lands had as yet served as

[1] Sim. Durh. "Hist. Dun. Ecc." lib. ii. c. vi.

[2] "Non enim tunc adhuc illa civitas firmos et stabilitos muros illis temporibus habebat." Asser (Wise), p. 18.

[3] "Illic maxima ex parte omnes Northanhymbrensium coeti, occisis duobus regibus, cum multis nobilibus deleti occubuerunt." —Asser (Wise), p. 18. Flor. Worc. gives the date of this battle as Palm Sunday, or March 21, 867.

refuge for what remained of order and industry in the growing anarchy of the country. But it was mainly the abbeys that roused the pirates' greed; and so unsparing was their attack after the victory at York[1] that, in what had till now been the main home of English monasticism, monasticism wholly passed away. The doom that had long ago fallen on Jarrow and Wearmouth fell now on all the houses of the coast. The abbey of Tynemouth was burned. Streoneshealh, the house of Hild and of Cadmon, vanished so utterly that its very name disappeared, and the little township which took its place in later days bore the Danish name of Whitby. It was the same with the inland houses. Cuthbert's Melrose, Ceadda's Lastingham, no longer broke the silence of Tweeddale or Pickering. If Wilfrid's church at Ripon still remained standing,[2] his abbey perished; and though Archbishop Æthelberht's church still towered over York in the glory of its new stonework we hear no more of library or school. As a see indeed, York in time profited by the blow. On the general fabric of the church in the north it fell heavily; after the sack of Holy Island the Bishop of Lindisfarne was hunted from refuge to refuge with the relics of Cuthbert;[3] the Bishop of Lindsey was driven to seek a new home in the south; while the bishopric at Hexham came wholly to an end.[4] But the ruin of its fellow sees

[1] Bernicia, however, was not ravaged nor its abbeys destroyed till Halfdene's raid in 875.

[2] It was destroyed by Eadred in 948.

[3] Sim. Durh. "Hist. Dunelm. Ecc." lib. ii. c. vi.

[4] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. p. 274.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-873.

brought to York a new greatness. As representative of conquered Northumbria, and as the one power which remained permanent amidst the endless revolutions of the pirate state which superseded it, the Primate at York became the religious centre of the North at a moment when the North regained the political individuality it seemed to have lost since the days of Eadberht.[1] The gain of the primacy, however, was a small matter beside the losses of the country at large. The blows of the Dane were aimed with so fatal a precision at the centres of its religious and intellectual life that of the houses which served as the schools, libraries, and universities of Northumbria not one remained standing in the regions over which the conquerors swept. So thoroughly was the work of destruction done that the country where letters and culture had till now found their favourite home remained for centuries to come the rudest and most ignorant part of Britain.

The Danes threaten Mercia.

As yet, however, the Danes seem to have had little aim but plunder; and they were hardly masters of Deira when, setting up Ecgberht as an underking,[2] they turned to seek new spoil in the south. They seized the passage of the Trent at Nottingham, formed their winter camp there,[3] and threatened Mercia in the coming spring. But their way was suddenly barred. At the threat of invasion the Mercian king Burhred, with his Witan, called for aid

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. p. 273.

[2] "Sub suo dominio regem Ecgberhtum præfecerunt," Sim. Durh. "Hist. Dunelm. Ecc." lib. ii. c. vi.

[3] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 19, 20; Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 868.

from his West-Saxon overlord,[1] The inaction of Æthelred through the strife in Northumbria shows that in spite of the submission at Dore [2] the northern realm stood practically without the West-Saxon supremacy. But time and the policy of the house of Ecgberht had tightened the bonds which linked central Britain to the West-Saxon crown; and the appeal for help against the Welsh in Æthelwulf's days, as now for help against the Danes, shows that Mercia thoroughly recognized its position as an under-kingdom. The call was heard, and a rapid march brought Æthelred's host to the Danish front at the passage of the Trent. At the head of his joint army of Mercians and West-Saxons the king sought at once to give battle. The Danes however were too good soldiers to be drawn into the field; they fell back on their invariable policy of fighting behind earthworks: and the defences of their camp proved too strong to be broken through, even by the fierce attacks of the English host.[3] But if Æthelred failed to crush the Dane, he at any rate saved Mercia, for a peace between the Danes and Mercians at last parted the combatants. While Æthelred withdrew to Wessex, the Danes fell back baffled to winter at York; and the severity of their losses seems to be shown by their inactivity for the rest of the year.[4]

When they next quitted York indeed it was to

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 19.

[2] The Northumbrians had owned Ecgberht as their overlord at Dore, on the borders of Derbyshire and Yorkshire, in 827. Eng. Chron. a. 827. (A.S.G.)

[3] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 20.

[4] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 869.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

Their conquest of East-Anglia.

seek another prey than Mercia. It was the wealth of the great Fen abbeys that drew the pirate force, with Ivar and his brother Hubba still at its head, at the close of 869 to an attack on the East-Anglian realm. The Lincolnshire men may, as after tradition held,[1] have thrown themselves across their path; but if so, it was to be routed in as decisive an overthrow as that of York; and Peterborough, Crowland, and Ely were sacked and fired while their monks fled or lay slain among the ruins. From the land of the Gyrwas however they suddenly struck for East-Anglia itself;[2] and crossing the Devil's Dyke without resistance raised their winter camp at Thetford. The success of their inroad was complete. Brave as their strife with Mercia but a few years before shows them to have been, the East-Engle were utterly defeated in two attacks on the Danish camp; and the strife ended with the capture of their king, Eadmund, who was brought prisoner before the pirate leaders, bound to a tree, and shot to death with arrows. His martyrdom by the heathen made him the St. Sebastian of English legend; in later days his figure gleamed from the pictured windows of church after church along the eastern coast, and a stately abbey which bore his name rose over his relics.

They attack Wessex.

How great was the terror stirred by these successive victories was shown in the action of Mercia, for though still free from actual attack, it cowered panic-stricken before the Dane, and by payment of

[1] Ingulf gives plentiful details of this inroad; but it is impossible to make more than general use of so late a forgery.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 870.

tribute owned his supremacy. This submission brought Wessex face to face with the pirates. The southern kingdom stood utterly alone, for the work of Ecgberht had been undone at a blow, and but five years' fighting had sufficed to tear England north of Thames from its overlordship. It is hard to believe that such a revolution can have been wholly wrought by the Danish sword, or that conquests so rapid and so complete as those of Ivar can have been made possible save by the temper of the lands he won. The English realms were still in fact far from owning themselves as an English nation. To Northumbria, to Mercia, to East Anglia, their conquest by the Dane must have seemed little save a transfer from one foreign overlord to another; and it may be that in each of the three lands there were men who preferred the supremacy of the Dane to the supremacy of the West-Saxon. But the loss of the two kingdoms left Wessex alone before the heathen foe. The time had come when it had to fight not for supremacy but for life. It was the last obstacle in the pirate's path. Elsewhere all had gone well with him. Britain seemed on the point of becoming a Scandinavian land. The Orkney Jarls had conquered Caithness. The Scot King had become a tributary of the northmen. Northumbria and East Anglia lay in Danish hands, while Mid-Britain owned their supremacy. Nor did the conquest of Wessex promise to be a hard matter. Except in his one march upon Nottingham, Æthelred had done nothing to save his underkingdoms from the wreck; and when the pirate host set out from East Anglia its work in southern

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858. 878.

The Danes in Berkshire.

Britain promised to be as easy and complete as its work in the north.

The leader in the new fray was no longer Ragnar's son, Ivar, who seems to have returned to his conquest of Deira, while his brother Hubba had put afresh to sea with a Wiking fleet which we shall find later on in the Bristol Channel; but Guthrum or Gorm, who may (as later genealogies told) have been of kin to the Gorm who was soon to draw the Danish people together into a kingdom of Denmark. With him marched Bægsceg, the Danish King of Bernicia, and a crowd of jarls, Sidroc the Old and Sidroc the Young, Osbern, and Fræna, and Harald among them.[1] In 871 their host sailed up the Thames past London, and seized a tongue of land some half a mile from Reading for its camp.[2] The country which was to form the scene of the coming struggle was the square of rough forest-country to which the abundance of "bearroc" or box-trees among its woodlands gave the name of Berkshire,[3] a district wedged as it were into an angle which the Thames makes as it runs from its head-waters eastward to Oxford and then turns suddenly to the south to cleave its way through chalk uplands to Reading and the Kennet valley. The bulk of the shire was still wild and thinly peopled, for chalk downs spread over the heart of it from the Thames to Hampshire, and the fertile

[1] We know these as having fallen at Ashdown. Asser (ed. Wise), p. 23.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 871.

[3] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 1. "Illa paga quæ nominatur Bearrocscire, quæ paga taliter vocatur a Berroc sylva, ubi buxus abundantissime nascitur."

Kennet valley to the south lay pressed between these uplands and the barren and tangled country about Windsor. But the northern escarpment of the downs looked over the broad reaches of the Vale of White Horse, where the deep clay soil lent itself to tillage, where English settlements clustered thickly, and manors of the West-Saxon kings were scattered over the land.

Ælfred.

One of these king's-tuns, that of Wantage,[1] had been the birthplace of the youngest of Æthelwulf's sons, the Ætheling Ælfred.[2] Young as he still was, Ælfred's life had been a stirring and eventful one. He was but four years old when he was sent with a company of nobles to Rome,[3] on an embassy which paved the way for Æthelwulf's own visit two years later, and he returned to the imperial city in his father's train. The boy's long stay there, as well as

[1] "In villâ regia quæ dicitur Wanading," Asser (ed. Wise), p. 1.

[2] For Ælfred's life the main authority must be the work attributed to Asser. Its genuineness, which was disputed by Mr. Wright ("Biographia Britannica Literaria"), is admitted by almost all other scholars; though the critical examination of Pauli ("Life of Ælfred," pp. 4—11) shows in how damaged a state the book has come down to us. In spite of all difficulties however "no theory of the authorship or date of the work," says Mr. Earle ("Parallel Chronicles," Intr. p. lvi.), "has ever been proposed which on the whole meets the facts of the case better than that set forth in the book itself, that it was written in 893." Asser has embodied the whole contents of the existing chronicle from 851 to 887, a point at which there are good grounds for believing the Chronicle, as Ælfred found it, to have ended. This coincidence "is strongly in favour of the professed date."

[3] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 853.

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CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

at the Frankish court, left a mark on his mind which we can trace through all his after life. English as Ælfred was to the core, his international temper, his freedom from a narrow insularism, his sense of the common interests and brotherhood of Christian nations, pointed back to the childish days when he looked on the wonders of Rome or listened to the scholars and statesmen who thronged the court of Charles the Bald. There was little, as we have seen, to break the peace of the land as the Ætheling grew to manhood save passing raids of the northmen from Gaul, and the vigour and restlessness of the boy's temper found no outlet for itself but in the chase. But the thirst for knowledge was already quickening within him. It was one of the bitter regrets of his after life that at this time, when he had leisure and will to learn, he could find no man to teach him. But what he could learn he learned. The love of English verse which never left him dated from these earlier days. It was a book of English songs which (if we accept the story in spite of its difficulties)[1] his mother promised to the first of her sons who learned to read it. The beauty of its letters caught Ælfred's eye, and seizing the book from his mother's hand, he sought a master who repeated it to him till the boy's memory enabled him to recite its poems by heart.[2]

His political position.

As yet however his temper had little political importance; for he stood far from the throne. But death was already paving his way to it. Æthelbald enjoyed the crown but two years after his father's

[1] See Pauli's criticisms, "Life of Ælfred," p. 51.

[2] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 16.

death; and only six years later the death of Æthelberht in 866, and the accession of his one surviving brother Æthelred, set Ælfred next in the accepted order of succession to the West-Saxon throne. The stress of events too called him now to sterner studies than those of letters, for though the consolidation of the Eastern Kingdom with the rest of the monarchy hindered him from becoming its under-king, he held an office, that of Secundarius, in which we may perhaps see a germ of the later Justiciarship; and it was in discharge of these new duties that he marched at nineteen with his brother to the Trent. The policy of Ecgberht's house aimed at a close union with Central Britain: a sister of Ælfred was already wife of the Mercian king; and in Ælfred's union at this moment with the daughter of an ealdorman of the Gainas, we see a trace of the same policy which brought about in later days the marriage of his own daughter with the Mercian Æthelred.[1] But the marriage feast was roughly broken up, for the young husband was seized in the midst of it with a disease, probably that of epilepsy, from which he was never afterwards to be wholly free. Neither sickness nor marriage however held Ælfred back from the field; he fought in the West-Saxon ranks at Nottingham;[2] and now that the Dane attacked his own Wessex he led the van of his brother's host.

Success of the Danes.

It may have been to save the home of his childhood that the young Ætheling fought so stoutly in the after fights. But king and people fought as stoutly as Ælfred himself, for now that they were

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 59. [2] Eng. Chron. a. 868.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

attacked on their own ground the West Saxons turned fiercely at bay. We have seen how from the first the Gwent had been screened from invasion by the impenetrable barriers that guarded it on every side, and how the hosts of its earlier assailants had fallen back before steeps such as those of Wanborough and Ashdown. A far different fortune however seemed to await the Danes. They had no sooner reached Reading than one of their marauding parties was cut to pieces by a force hastily gathered under the ealdorman of the district; and the check gave Æthelred and his brother time to hurry to the field;[1] but though the king at once assailed the camp which the pirates had formed by running an entrenchment from the Kennet to the Thames, a desperate fight ended in his repulse, and the defeat threw open Wessex to the invaders. As the beaten Englishmen fell back along the Thames the pirates pushed rapidly by the ancient track known as the Ridgeway along the edge of the upland which looks over the Vale of White Horse, till on the height of Ashdown they threw up entrenchments and again encamped.[2]

The battle of Ashdown.

The march of the Danes showed their genius for war. They had in fact thrown themselves on their enemy's rear, and not only cut off his communications with the Gwent but turned its very escarpments against him, for it was Æthelred and not the Danes that had to storm the heights of Ashdown in the coming struggle. From such a post indeed all Wessex lay at the mercy of the invaders. But they had still

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 871; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 21.
[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 871.

to fight for it; for neither Æthelred nor Ælfred were men to give up hope at a single blow. Four days after the fight at Reading the English army, reinforced probably by the men of Wantage and the neighbourhood, stood again face to face with its foes, and Ælfred, who led the advance, at once attacked them.[1] Posted, however, as they were on a hill covered with thick brushwood and sheltered by their usual entrenchments, the Danes held the Ætheling's troops stoutly at bay; and though message after message called Æthelred to his aid the king refused to march till the mass he was hearing was done. "God first and man after," Æthelred answered his brother's cry; and Ælfred could only save his men from utter rout by charging again and again "like a wild boar" up the slope. The king however showed a cool judgement in his delay, for his men were well in hand before he moved; and the general advance of his army at last cleared the fatal hill. The fight raged fiercest round a stunted thorn-tree which men in after days noted curiously ("I have seen it with my own eyes," says Asser), and here with loud shouts Dane and Englishman battled hard. But the shouts were hushed at last. The day went for Æthelred. King Bagsecg fell beneath the sword of the king himself; and five pirate Jarls lay among the corpses which were heaped upon the field.[2]

Ælfred becomes king

But routed as it was, Guthrum's host sought shelter in the camp at Reading, and its entrenchments again held the brothers at bay. The West Saxons still

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), pp. 22, 23.
[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 871.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

indeed kept their mastery in the field, beating back the Danes as they tried a new dash along the line of the Kennet, and holding them in check at Basing when with forces strengthened by the arrival of fresh troops from the Thames they struck southward for Hampshire. But the camp at Reading remained impregnable, and every hour of delay told fatally against Æthelred. Already weakened by these fierce encounters, the West-Saxon leader was hampered above all by the difficulty of holding his levies together. Men called from farm and field and looking for support to the rations they brought with them were eager to fight and go home; while the Danes were constantly reinforced by fresh comers, and spurred to new efforts by the need of procuring supplies from the country they won. A change in the relative weight of the two armies at last showed itself, for a new raid upon Surrey brought the pirates better luck than its predecessors; and after a brave fight at Merton, in which their king was mortally wounded, the West Saxons drew off beaten from the field.[1] When Æthelred's death in April[2] added its gloom to the gloom of defeat, and Ælfred took his place on the throne, the young king (he numbered but two and twenty years) stood almost alone in front of the enemy, for at the news of his brother's death the English levies had broken up and gone home.

The Danes master Mercia.

At this very hour a large fleet of Danes pushed up Thames to join their fellows at Reading, and Ælfred

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 871.

[2] Flor. of Worc. dates it three weeks after Easter, which, in 871, would make it April 23.

was forced to hurry from his brother's grave at Wimborne with what men he could muster to meet a fresh advance of the foe. But with such forces little could be done to check their march. They seem already to have entered the Gwent and to have encamped at Wilton, the early "tun" to which our Wiltshire owes its name, before Ælfred could meet them;[1] and a desperate attack which the young king made on them there was roughly beaten off. A succession of petty defeats forced Ælfred at last to a shameful truce; and at the counsel of his Witan he bought with hard money the withdrawal of the Danes from the land. The shame was hard to bear, for though bargains of this sort had been common enough in Ireland and Gaul, a purchased peace had as yet scarcely been known among Englishmen; and the distress of Ælfred may be seen in a vow of alms to the holy places in Rome and even in far-off India for deliverance from his foes, which marked this dark hour of his history.[2] But if the gold won a respite for Wessex, it left the pirates free to complete their work in the centre of the island. Granting peace, no doubt on terms of tribute, to the ruler of Mid-Britain, the host after

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 871; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 25.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Canterbury), a. 883. "This year Sighelm and Æthelstan carried to Rome the alms which the king vowed to send thither, and also to India, to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, when they sat down against the army at London." The Danish "here" retired after the truce to winter at London (Eng. Chron. a. 872); but we have no account of Ælfred's sitting down against them; and as this is a late copy of the Chronicle, its entry may be a mere blunder for Asser's entry, "Paganorum exercitus Lundoniam adiit et ibi hiemavit," or rather Huntingdon's copy of this, "quando hostilis exercitus hiemavit apud Lundoniam."

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CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

a year spent in Northumbria returned to its camp at Torksey in Lincolnshire to gather fresh forces for a new campaign;[1] then, in the spring of 874, the Danes burst upon Mercia. We hear of no resistance. King Burhred fled over sea without striking a blow to find refuge and a grave at Rome; while his conquerors, setting up a puppet king, Ceolwulf, in his room, took oath of vassalage from him and his subjects, and wintered at Repton, sacking and firing the great abbey which served as the burial-place of the Mercian kings.[2]

Division of the Danish host.

Their mastery of central Britain however only served to give the Danes a firmer base from which to complete their conquest of the island, both in north and south. With the spring of 875 their force broke asunder; one part of it with Halfdene at its head marching northward to the Tyne to complete the reduction of Bernicia.[3] The aim of the pirates still remained mainly that of plunder, and the religious houses which had escaped till now fell in this fiercer storm. Coldingham, the house of Ebbe, was burnt to the ground. Bishop Eardulf was driven from Lindisfarne, carrying with him the body of Cuthbert as his chiefest treasure, to wander with it for years from one hiding-place to another.[4] When little

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 873.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 874; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 26. Æthelweard a. 872. "Myrcii confirmant cum eis fœderis pactum stipendiaque statuunt." From the Chronicle it seems that the Danes took part of Mercia, leaving part to Ceolwulf. Is this the beginning of the division into Danish and English Mercia?

[3] Eng. Chron. a. 875.

[4] Sim. Durh. "Gest. Reg." a. 875.

remained to glean from the wasted land Halfdene led his men through Cumbria, where Carlisle was entirely destroyed, and on through Strath-Clyde[1] to the north, where the Scot king Constantine was battling for life against Thorstein, a son of Olaf the Fair, and the Norwegian Jarl Sigurd who had now established himself in the Orkneys. Thorstein and Sigurd overran the northern parts of the realm while Halfdene advanced from the south, till the Scots, pressed between the two pirate hosts, bought peace for the moment by the cession of Caithness. But while one portion of the host was thus busy beyond the Humber, Guthrum was leading the other half from their winter-quarters at Repton to Cambridge to prepare for a final onset upon Wessex. The greatness of the contest had now drawn to Britain the whole strength of the northmen. Ireland won a long rest as its Ostmen flocked to join their brethren over the sea; and the force of the pirates in Gaul was so weakened that Charles was able to drive them from their stronghold at Angers. But the weakness of the pirates to east and west only pointed to a general concentration of their force upon Britain, and it was with a host swollen by reinforcements from every quarter that Guthrum in 876 set sail for the south.[2]

Ælfred had equipped a few ships which served to

[1] "Pictos atque Stretduccenses depopulati sunt," Sim. Durh. "He made raids on the Picts and the Strath-Clyde Wealhs," Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 875. "Inducunt Pihtis bellum Cumbrisque," Æthelweard, a. 875, lib. iv. c. 3. Skene notes this as "the first appearance of the term of Cumbri or Cumbrians, as applied to the Britons of Strath-Clyde."

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 875; Asser. (ed. Wise), p. 27.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

Guthrum's second attack on Wessex.

beat off some smaller parties that attacked the coast, but the little squadron was helpless to meet such a fleet as now put out from the harbours of East-Anglia. Coasting by Dover, Guthrum made like the earlier marauders for the Dorset coast, and seized a neck of land near Wareham between the Piddle and the Frome for his camp. Ælfred at once marched on these lines; but they were too strong to storm; and gold, we can hardly doubt, again bought a treaty in which the pirates swore on every relic that could be gathered as well as on their own Odin's ring, a sacred bracelet smeared with the blood of beasts offered at the god's altar, to quit the king's land. Ælfred's hold was no sooner loosened however than half of the northern host took horse and, striking across country, seized Exeter to winter in.[1] The seizure of the city may have been looked on by the Danes as no breach of faith, for Exeter was still in part a British town; but it was just this that made their presence there so serious a danger, and through the winter Ælfred girded himself for a resolute effort to drive them out before their success could cause a Welsh rising. At break of spring in 877 the West-Saxon army closed round the town, while a hired fleet[2] cruised off the coast to guard against rescue. A storm which drove their boats on the rocks of Swanage foiled the efforts of the freebooters who remained at Wareham to rescue their brethren, and

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 877.

[2] "Impositisque piratis in illis vias maris custodiendas commisit."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 29.

The surprise of Wessex.

Exeter was at last starved into surrender, while Guthrum again swore to leave Wessex.[1]

The Danish host withdrew in fact into the Severn valley to winter at Gloucester.[2] But Ælfred had hardly disbanded the army which had taken Exeter when Hubba, Ivar's brother, with a fleet which had been ravaging in the Bristol Channel, struck up the Severn to Guthrum's aid. All thought of the oath they had sworn at once passed from the minds of the invaders; and at the opening of 878 Hubba with a squadron of twenty-three ships made his way to the coast of Devonshire, while the main body of the northern host again crossed the Avon and pushed by a swift and secret march as far as Chippenham.[3] The surprise of Wessex was complete. The Danes were in the heart of the Gwent before tidings of their advance could call either king or people to arms, and the whole district east of the Selwood lay at their mercy. To gather the fyrd of Hampshire or Wilts or Berkshire in face of the pirates was impossible. Their activity made them masters of the land; "many of the folk they drove beyond sea" over the Bristol Channel, "and the greater part of the rest they forced to obey them."[4] Ælfred alone remained untouched by the terror about him. Falling back through the Selwood on the westernmost fragment of Wessex, the land of the Somer-sætas and Defn-sætas, he seems even there to

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 877.
[2] Æthelweard, a. 877, lib. iv. c. 3.
[3] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 30.
[4] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

have found his efforts to gather a force baffled for a while by civil strife;[1] and the band which still followed the king made its way with difficulty to the marshes that occupied the heart of Somersetshire.[2] From Langport to the site of the later Bridgewater, the country between Polden Hill and the Quantocks was little more than a vast morass drained by the deep channel of the Parret. The local names of the district, Sedgemoor, on whose half-reclaimed flats Monmouth was to meet his doom, the "zoys" or rises crowned now-a-days with marsh-villages, such as Chedzoy and Middlezoy, preserve a record of the flood-drowned fen in which Ælfred sought shelter. In the midst of it, at a point where the Tone flowing northwards from Taunton strikes the Parret, lies Athelney, a low lift of ground some two acres in extent, girded in by almost impassable fen-lands. It was at Athelney that the king threw up a fort and waited for brighter days.[3]

Defeat of the Danes.

A jewel of blue enamel inclosed in a setting of gold with the words round it "Ælfred had me wrought" was found here in the seventeenth century, and still recalls the memories of this gallant stand. It was only later legend[4] that changed it into a solitary flight, as it turned the three months of Ælfred's stay in this fastness into three years of hiding. The three months were in fact months of

[1] "Ælfredo," says Æthelweard, a. 886, "quem ingenio, quem occursu, non superaverat civilis discordia sæva."

[2] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 30.

[3] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 33.

[4] The legend of St. Neot, written at the end of the tenth century, of which fragments break our actual text of Asser.

active preparation for a new struggle. Athelney was a position from which Ælfred could watch closely the movements of his foes, and with the first burst of spring he found himself ready to attack them. Whatever disunion may have thwarted him before must now have been hushed, for the fyrd of Devonshire gathered round its Ealdorman Odda, and falling suddenly on Hubba, whose squadron was harrying its coast, cut his men to pieces;[1] while the men of Somerset rallied round their Ealdorman, Æthelnoth. In the second week of May, 878, the whole host of the West Saxons mustered under their young king's standard at Ecgberht's stone on the east of Selwood. Till now their gathering had been hidden from the Danes by this great screen of woodland, and when they burst through it into the older Wessex the surprise may have been as complete as when the Danes burst in from Chippenham. Whatever was the cause of his success, Ælfred no sooner found their host at Ethandun or Edington, near Westbury, than he defeated it in a great battle, and drove the beaten warriors to seek shelter in their camp. But the camp at Edington, unlike the camps which had hitherto repulsed the English, had no outlet by river to the sea; it was possible to cut off its supplies, and a siege of fourteen days forced the Danes to surrender.[2]

The Peace of Wedmore.

The struggle had been a short one, but the completeness of Ælfred's victory was seen in its results. The spirit of the assailants was utterly broken; and while the bulk of the pirate host withdrew under a

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 33.
[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878; Asser (ed. Wise), pp. 33, 34.

CHAP. III.

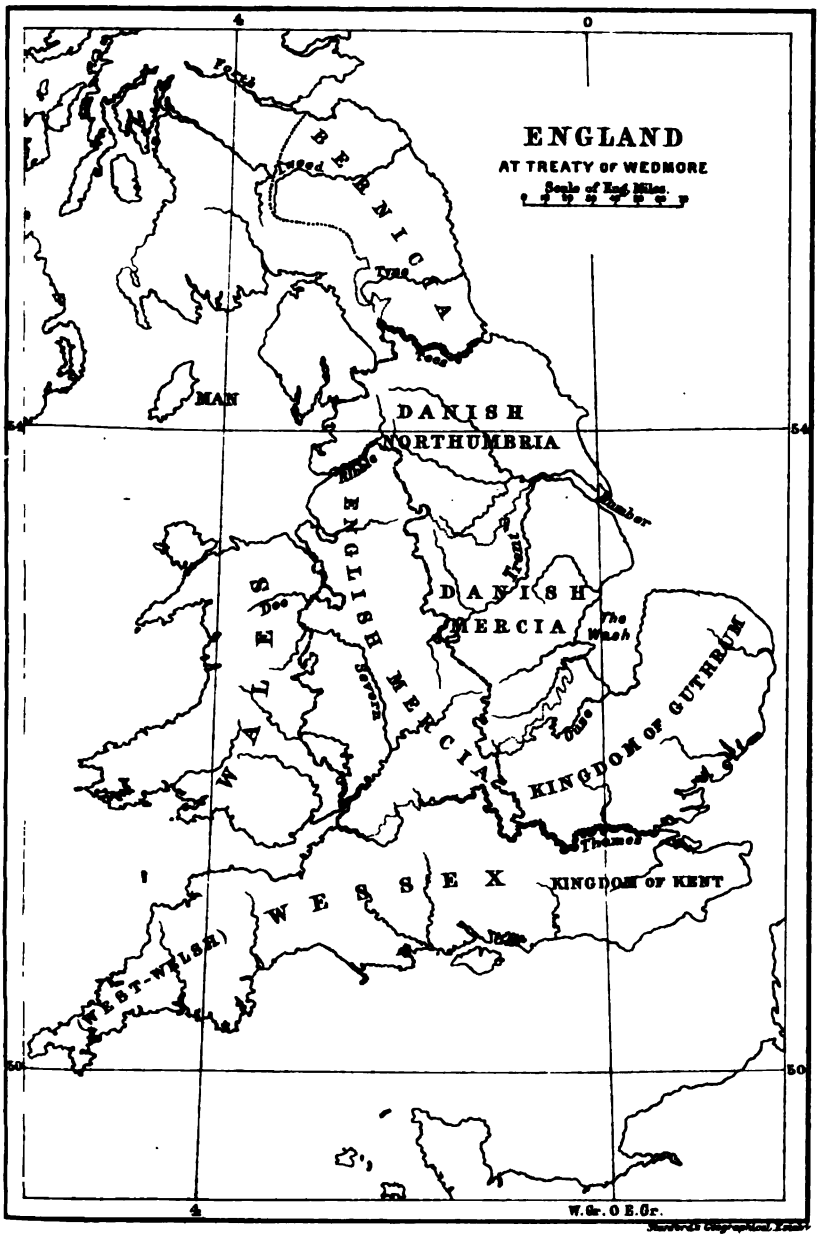
The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

leader named Hasting to their old quarters in Gaul, Guthrum, the leader of the rest, bound himself by a solemn Peace at Wedmore, a village on the north of the Polden Hills,[1] to become a Christian, and to quit Ælfred's realm. The treaty itself is lost,[2] but its provisions are no doubt marked in the events that followed. Not only did the Danes withdraw from all England south of the Thames, but they left in Ælfred's hands all England westward of the Watling Street, the land of the Hwiccas, the upper part of the valley of the Thames, and the whole valley of the Severn. The rich pastures along the Cherwell, the downs of the Cotswolds, the forest-tract of Arden, the flats which lay about the still deserted ruins of the later Chester, Oxford, Worcester, and Gloucester, were thus rescued from heathen rule. The rescue of this district however was a small matter beside the fact that Wessex itself was saved. In the dark hour when Ælfred lay watching from his fastness of Athelney, men believed that the whole island had passed into the invader's hands. Once settled in the south, as they were already settled in central and northern England, the Danes would have made short work of what resistance lingered on elsewhere, and a few years would have sufficed to make England a Scandinavian country. All danger of this had vanished with the Peace of Wedmore. The whole outlook of the pirates was changed. Dread as Ælfred might the sword that hung over him, the Danes

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878; Asser (ed. Wise), p. 35.

[2] The existing "Ælfred and Guthrum's Peace," is, as we shall see, of later date.



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themselves were as yet in no mood to renew their attack upon Wessex; and with the abandonment of this attack not only was all hope of winning Britain as a whole abandoned, but all chance of making it a secure base and starting-point for wider Scandinavian conquests passed away.

Its effect on Europe.

The tide of invasion in fact had turned; and Europe felt that it had turned. The struggle with the West-Saxons had been marked by a general pause in the operations of the pirates elsewhere, for their number was so small in relation to the area over which they fought that their concentration for any great struggle in one quarter meant their weakening and retreat in another. It is clear from the general aspect of the war in Gaul, that the conquest of the Danelaw and the absorption of a large force in its settlement had already weakened the strength of the northern onset upon the Franks. The courage of the peoples across the Channel rose as the pressure of the northmen became lighter; and we see in every quarter a growing resistance to the invaders. But this resistance took a new vigour when the Danes were thrown back from Wessex. The spell of terror was broken. Nowhere had the attack been so resolute; nowhere had the forces of the pirates been so great; nowhere had their campaigns been conducted on so steady and regular a plan; nowhere had they so nearly reached the verge of success. And nowhere had they so utterly failed. The ease and completeness with which the invaders had won the bulk of Britain only brought out in stronger relief the completeness of their repulse from the south.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

The Danelaw.

Great however as were the results of Ælfred's victory, the fact remained that the bulk of Britain lay still in Danish hands. If we look at it in its relation to England as a whole, the treaty of Wedmore was the acknowledgement of a great defeat. Bravely as the house of Ecgberht had fought, the work of Ecgberht was undone. The dominion which he had built up was wrecked like the dominion of the Karolings; and for the moment it seemed yet more completely wrecked. The blows of the northmen had fallen indeed as heavily on the one dominion as on the other; but in the Karolingian Empire their settlements were scattered and few, nor had they any importance save in furthering the tendency of its various peoples to fall apart into their old isolation. In England, on the other hand, the Danes had won the bulk of the land for their own. Beaten as they were from Wessex, all northern, all eastern, and a good half of central Britain remained Scandinavian ground. The settlements of the northmen in Frankland, those in Friesland or on the Loire, even the more permanent Norman settlements at a later time on the Seine, were too small to sway in other than indirect ways the fortunes of the states across the Channel. But in Britain the Danish conquests outdid in extent and population what was left to the English king, and the realm of Ælfred saw across Watling Street a rival whose power was equal to, or even greater than, its own.

The Danes in Northumbria.

Nor was this conquest a mere work of the sword. With the change of masters went a social revolution, for over the whole space from the Thames to

the Tees the Danes throughout Ælfred's day were settling down on the conquered soil. Their first settlement was in Deira, in the area occupied by the present Yorkshire. Though their victory at York had left this district in their hands as early as the spring of 868, they contented themselves for the next seven years with the exaction of tribute from an under-king, Ecgberht, whom they set over it, while they mastered East-Anglia and crushed Mid-Britain, and made their first onset on Wessex. But in 875, while Guthrum prepared to renew the attack on Ælfred, Halfdene with a portion of the Danish army at Repton marched northward into Northumbria. It is possible that he was drawn there by a rising of the country in which Ecgberht had been driven from the throne and Ricsig set as under-king in his place; but if so the death of Ricsig marks the close of this rising, and Halfdene marched unopposed to the Tyne. From his winter-camp there he "subdued the land and oft-times spoiled the Picts and the Strathclyde Wealhs."[1] With the spring of 876 however, while Guthrum and Ælfred were busy with the siege of Wareham, he fell back from Bernicia to the south, and "parted" among his men "the lands of Northumbria. Thenceforth" adds the chronicler, "they went on ploughing and tilling them."[2] That this "deal" or division of the land did not, in spite of Halfdene's conquests on the Tyne, extend to Bernicia we know from the fact that hardly a trace of Danish settlement can be found north of the Tees.[3] But the names of the towns and villages of Deira show

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 875.
[2] *Ibid.* 876.
[3] Taylor, "Words and Places," p. 112.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

us in how systematic a way southern Northumbria was parted among its conquerors. The change seems to have been much the same as that which followed the conquest of the Normans. The English population was not displaced, but the lordship of the soil was transferred to the conqueror. The settlers formed a new aristocracy, while the older nobles fell to a lower position; for throughout Deira the life of an English thegn was priced at but half the value of the life of a northern "hold."

Their settlements.

Some of the new settlements can be easily traced through the termination "by," a Scandinavian equivalent for the English "tun" or "ham," while others may be less certainly distinguished by their endings in "thwaite" or "dale;" and in each of the Ridings of Yorkshire we still find at least a hundred local names of this Danish type. Where they cluster most thickly is in the dales that break the wild tract of moorland along the coast from Whitby to the Tees valley, to which the newcomers gave the name of Cliff-land or Cleveland. Around Whitby itself, the "White-by" of the northern settlers, the little town that rose on either side its river-mouth beneath the height on which the ruins of Streoneshealh, the home of Hild and Cadmon, stood blackened and desolate, the country is thickly dotted with northern names. Memories of the pirate faith, of Balder and of Thor, meet us in Baldersby[1] or Thornaby as in the lost name of Presteby or Priest's town; other hamlets give us the names of the warriors themselves as they turned to "plough and till," Beorn and Ailward,

[1] Now Baldby Fields.

Grim and Aswulf, Orm and Tol, Thorald and Swein.[1] A few names of far greater interest hint how race distinctions still perpetuated themselves in the group of little townships. Three Englebys or Inglebys and two Normanbys tell how here and there lords of the old Engle race still remained on a level with the conquerors, or how Northmen or Norwegians who had joined in the fighting had their share in the spoil.[2] At the other extremity of this district, in the valley of the Tees, a curious coincidence almost enables us to detect the spot from which the settlers came. On the coast of South Jutland we find two towns in close neighbourhood, Middleburg and Aarhus; while in the Tees valley Middlesborough is as closely neighboured by its "Aarhus-um" or Airsome. It is hardly possible not to believe that the great iron-mart of Cleveland must look for its mother-city to the little Jutish township, as the Boston of the New World looks for its mother-city to the Boston of the Old.[3]

Their trade.

Cleveland remained for centuries to come a thoroughly Scandinavian district; of its twenty-seven lords in Domesday, twenty-three still bore distinctively Danish

[1] Barnby, Ellerby, Grimsby, Aislaby (Asulvesbi), Ormsby, Tolesby, Swainby, Thoraldby.

[2] Atkinson, "Glossary of Cleveland Dialect," Introd. xiv. &c. Even the judicial institutions of the settlers survive in "Thingwall," a spot by Whitby, which has vanished from the modern map, but whose name Mr. Atkinson discovers in a "Memorial of Benefactions to Whitby Abbey" as "Thingvala."

[3] Atkinson, "Cleveland Dialect," Introd. p. xiii. note. The South Jutland "Hjardum" probably finds a like successor in the Cleveland "Yarm" or "Yarum."

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

names, and names of a like character seem at a yet later time to have prevailed even among its serfs.[1] What drew settlers so thickly there was no doubt the neighbourhood of the sea; as ease of access from the sea drew them to the valley of the Ouse. The swift tide up the Humber, the "Higra" as it came to be called from the sea god Œgir, carried the northern boats past the marshes of Holderness to the trading port, the "Caupmanna-thorpe" or Cheapman's Thorpe, established by the newcomers to the south of York.[2] Like all men of the north the pirates were as keen traders as they were hard fighters;[3] their very kings were traffickers. Biorn, Harald Fair-hair's son, was "Biorn the Merchant," and St. Olaf was a partner in the trade ventures of his Jarls. The main end of their raids was to gather slaves for the slave-mart;[4] but they

[1] Atkinson, "Cleveland Dialect," Introd. pp. xx., xxi.

[2] Taylor, "Words and Places," p. 254. "Caupmansthorpe near York. . . . the form of the word shows us that here the Danish traders resided just as those of Saxon blood dwelt together at Chapmanslade."

[3] Skiringsal in the Wik was now the centre of northern trade. "The Sleswig ships brought to it German, Wendish, Prussian, Russian, Greek, and Eastern wares, as well as merchants and adventurers from these lands. In Skiringsal indeed the Halgolander might be seen driving bargains with the Prussian, the Trondheimer with the Saxon and the Wend, the Söndmöringer with the Dane and the Swede; beside the walrus-skins and furs from the north one might see amber from Prussia, costly stuffs from Greece and the East, Byzantine and Arabian coins and northern rings, while the harbour lay full of big and little ships of varied build, among which the kingly long-ship was distinguished not only by its size but by its magnificence." Munch, "Det Norske Folks Historie," (Germ. transl.), pt. iv. p. 141.

[4] We see the actual working of this slave-trade in Olaf Trygvasson's story. He was captured in his childhood, "with

brought with them the furs, oils, skins, and eider-down of their northern lands to barter for the wares of the south. Their settlements along the north coast were as much markets as pirate-holds; and York, which from this time became more and more a Danish city, was thronged at the close of a century with Danish merchants, and had become the centre of a thriving trade with the north. The new comers have left their mark in some of its local names: the street leading to its eastern outlet is still Guthrum's Gate; and the church of St. Olave reminds us how at the eve of the Norman Conquest the Danish population had spread to the suburbs of the town.

Their organization.

Over the central vale, from York to Catterick, we find the "byes" planted as was naturally the case pretty thickly, with a "Balderby" among them that suggests how the northern myths were settling on English soil with the northern marauders; and if the eastern wolds present few traces of their homes, they are frequent along the western moors. Of the life or institutions however of these settlers we know little, for from the moment of their settlement to the

his mother Astrid and his foster-father, Thorolf, by an Esthonian wiking, as they were crossing the sea from Sweden on their way to Novgorod, and were divided among the crew and sold. An Esthonian called Klerkon got Olaf and Thorolf for his share of the booty, but Astrid was separated from her son Olaf, then only three years old. Klerkon thought Thorolf too old for a slave, and that no work could be got out of him to repay his food, and therefore killed him, but sold the boy to a man called Klærk for a goat. A peasant called Reas bought him from Klærk for a good cloak, and he remained in slavery till he was recognized by his uncle." Laing, "Sea Kings of Norway," Introd. vol. i. p. 96.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

conquest of the Norman, northern England is for two hundred years all but hidden from our view. The division of Deira into three Trithings, or Ridings, which probably dates from this time, may answer in some degree to older divisions; the East Riding or district of the wolds to an earlier Deira of the English conquerors which seems in later times to have retained some sort of existence as an under-kingdom, while the bounds of the West Riding roughly correspond with those of Elmet, as Eadwine added it to his Northumbrian realm. But the arrangement by which the Trithings were linked together, the adjustment of their boundaries so that all three met in York itself, had clearly a distinct political end, and marks a time —such as that of the Danish kings—in which York was the seat and capital of the central power. The division of the Trithings into Wapentakes, which answer here to the Hundreds of the south, is probably of the same date. In England, as in Iceland, the word may have been originally used for the closing of the district-court, when the suitors again took up the weapons they had laid aside at its opening, and have finally extended to the district itself.[1] The change of the English name "moot" for the gathering of the freeman in township or wapentake into the Scandinavian "thing" or "ting," a change recorded, as we have seen, by local designations, is no less significant of the social revolution which passed over the north with the coming of the Dane.

The Danes in Mid-Britain.

The year after Halfdene's parting of Deira among his followers saw another portion of the Danish host

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 109.

settle in Mid-Britain. While Ælfred was still in the midst of his struggle with the Danes about Exeter, "in the harvest-tide of 877, the Here went into Mercia, and some of it they parted, and some they handed over to Ceolwulf" who till now had served as their under-king for the whole.[1] The portion they took for themselves is for the most part marked by the presence in it of their Danish names. "Byes" extend to the very borders of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, and Northamptonshire, while from the rest of Mercia they are almost wholly absent.[2] It was this western half of the older kingdom, our Cheshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Oxfordshire, which remained under Ceolwulf's rule,[3] and to which from this time the name of Mercia is confined, while the eastern or Danish

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 877. For Ceolwulf see ib. a. 874. "That same year they gave the Mercian kingdom to the keeping of Ceolwulf, an unwise thegn of the king" (Burhred, who had fled to die at Rome), "and he swore oaths to them, and delivered hostages to them that it should be ready for them on whatever day they would have it, and that he would be ready both in his own person and with all who would follow him for the behoof of the army."

[2] The country about Buckingham however, which formed the southern bound of the "Five Boroughs," has no "byes." Those about Wirral in Cheshire are an exception which I shall have to notice later on. We find too "byes" extending some few miles into our Warwickshire. I shall afterwards explain why I set aside the notion of Watling Street being the boundary of Danish Mercia.

[3] In 896 we find three ealdormen among the Witan of this part of Mercia. Cod. Dip. No. 1073. The number in the undivided Mercian realm seems to have been five.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

half was known, at any rate in later days, as the district of the Five Boroughs,[1] Derby, whose name superseded the older English "Northweorthig," Leicester, Lincoln, Stamford, and Nottingham. Politically this state differed widely from Danish Northumbria. While Northumbria was an organized kingdom under the stock of Inguar or Ivar, with a definite centre at York and a general administrative division into Trithings and Wapentakes, the independence of the Five Boroughs was unfettered by any semblance of kingly rule. Their name suggests some sort of confederacy; and it is possible that a common "Thing" may have existed for the whole district; but each of the Boroughs seems to have had its own Jarl, and Here or army, while (if we may judge from the instance of Lincoln and Stamford) the internal rule of each was in the hands of twelve hereditary "law-men." There was a like difference in local organization. In the country about Lincoln we find both Trithings and Wapentakes, as on the other side the Humber, but there is no trace of the Trithing in the territory of the four other Boroughs. The distribution of settlers over this midland Danelaw was as varied as their forms of rule. They lay thickest in the Lindsey uplands, where the lands seem to have been treated throughout as conquered country, and to have been parted among the conquerors by the rude rope-measurement of the time. Lincolnshire indeed contains as many names of

[1] The name first occurs in the Song of Eadmund, Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 941.

northern settlements as the whole of Yorkshire;[1] and its little port of Grimsby, whose muddy shores were thronged with traders from Norway and the Orkneys, came at last to rival York in commercial activity.[2] In the districts of the other four towns the names of such settlements are far less numerous; it is only in Leicestershire indeed that we find anything like the settlements of the north.[3]

The Danes in East Anglia.

In East Anglia the northern colonization was of a yet weaker sort than in Mid-Britain. Although this district had been in Danish hands since the fall of Eadmund in 870, its real settlement dated ten years later, when Guthrum led back his army from Wessex after the Frith or Peace of Wedmore. In 880 "the army went from Cirencester to East Anglia, and settled the land, and parted it among them."[4] Guthrum's realm, however, included far more than East Anglia itself. The after war of 886 and the

[1] Isaac Taylor, "Words and Places," p. 122, numbers some three hundred.

[2] "When Kali was fifteen winters old, he went with some merchants to England, taking with him a good cargo of merchandise. They went to a trading place called Grimsby. There was a great number of people from Norway, as well as from the Orkneys, Scotland, and the Sudreyar. . . . Then he, Kali, made a stanza—

"Unpleasantly we have been wading
In the mud a weary five weeks;
Dirt indeed we had in plenty
While we lay in Grimsby harbour."

Anderson, "Orkneyinga Saga," pp. 75-6.

This however was in the twelfth century.

[3] In Leicestershire Taylor finds one hundred such names, in Northampton and Notts fifty each, in Derby about a dozen. "Words and Places," p. 122.

[4] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 880.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

frith that followed it show that Essex was detached from the Eastern or Kentish kingdom, to which it had belonged since Ecgberht's day, and brought back to its old dependence on East Anglia. With Essex passed its chief city, London, now wasted by pillage and fires, but soon to regain its trading activity in Danish hands, and whose subject territory carried Guthrum's rule along the valley of the Thames as far as the Chilterns and the district attached to Oxford, which now became a border-town of English Mercia. To the north too Guthrum seems to have wielded the old East-Anglian supremacy over the southern districts of the Fen. In extent therefore his kingdom was fully equal to either of the two rival states of the Danelaw. But its character was far less northern. The bulk of the warrior-settlers may have already found homes on the Ouse or the Trent; it is certain at any rate that in East Anglia their settlements were few. The "byes" of Norfolk and Suffolk lie clustered for the most part round the mouth of the Yare; and this was probably the one part of this district where distinct pirate communities existed; throughout the rest of it the Danes must simply have quartered themselves on their English subjects. In the dependent districts to north and south they seem rather to have clustered in town-centres, such as Colchester and Bedford, or Huntingdon and Cambridge, where Jarl and Here remained encamped, receiving food and rent from the subject Englishmen who tilled their allotted lands.[1]

[1] Robertson, "Scotland under Early Kings," vol. ii., Appendix, "The Danelagh."

The East-Anglian Kingdom.

The small number of its settlers, however, was not the only circumstance which distinguished East Anglia from the rest of the Danelaw. Its local institutions remained English, while it was far more closely connected with the English kingdom than its fellow states. We find no trace of Trithing or Wapentake within its bounds. It was from the first too a Christian kingdom. A promise to receive baptism was part of the terms of surrender on Guthrum's side after his defeat at Edington; and "about three weeks after King Guthrum came to Ælfred . . . . at Alre near Athelney, and the king was his godfather in baptism, and his chrism-loosing[1] was at Wedmore; and he was twelve days with the king, and he greatly honoured him and his companions with gifts."[2] The policy of binding to him as far as he could this portion of the Danelaw was carried on by Ælfred in the later frith made between the two kings with "the witan of all the English-folk" "and all the people that are in East Anglia," which after marking the boundaries of the two realms, fixed the "wer" or life-value of both Englishman and Dane at the same amount,[3] settled the same procedure for claims to property, and pledged either party to refuse to receive deserters from the army or dominions of the other.[4]

[1] Probably the loosing of the fillet bound round the head at confirmation after the anointing of the brow with the chrism.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 878.

[3] "If a man be slain, we estimate all equally dear, English and Danish." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 155-6.

[4] "All ordained when the oaths were sworn that neither bond nor free might go to the host without leave, no more than any of them to us." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 156-7.

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

The Danelaw and the North.

From the Tees to the brink of the Thames valley, from the water-parting of the country to the German Sea, every inch of territory lay in Danish hands. The Danelaw was in fact by far the most important conquest which the northern warriors had made. In extent as in wealth and resources it equalled indeed, or more than equalled the Scandinavian realms themselves. To bring this great possession under their overlordship became, we cannot doubt, the dream of the kings who were beginning to build up the petty realms about them into the monarchies of the North; and it is possible that we find the earliest trace of that ambition which afterwards brought Swein and Harald Hardrada to the shores of Britain in a tale which, oddly as it has been disguised, may in its earlier form be taken as a fair record of the relations between the northern homeland and its outlier in the south. "At this time," says the Saga of Harald Fairhair,[1] "a king called Æthelstan had taken the kingdom of England." Chronological difficulties hinder us from seeing in this Æthelstan the later king of Wessex, and guide us to Guthrum of East Anglia, who had taken the name of Æthelstan at his baptism,[2] or to his son and successor who may have borne the same double name. Whichever of these kings it was, "he sent men to Norway to King Harald with this errand, that the messengers should present him with a sword, with hilt and handle gilt, and also its whole sheath adorned with gold and silver and set with precious jewels. The ambassadors presented the

[1] Laing, "Sea Kings of Norway," i. 308.

[2] Æthelweard, a. 889, lib. iv. c. 3.

sword hilt to the king saying, 'Here is a sword which King Æthelstan sends thee, with the request that thou wilt accept it.' The king took the sword by the handle; whereupon the ambassadors said, 'Now thou hast taken the sword according to our king's desire, and therefore art thou his subject, as thou hast taken his sword.' King Harald saw now that this was a jest, for he would be subject to no man. But he remembered it was his rule, whenever anything raised his anger, to collect himself and let his passion run off, and then take the matter into consideration coolly. Now he did so and consulted his friends, who all gave him the advice to let the ambassadors in the first place go home in safety."

"The following summer King Harald sent a ship westward to England, and gave the command of it to Hauk Haabrok. He was a great warrior, and very dear to the king. Into his hands he gave his son Hakon. Hauk proceeded westward to England, and found the king in London where there was just at the time a great feast and entertainment. When they came to the hall Hauk told his men how they should conduct themselves; namely, how he who went first in should go last out, and all should stand in a row at the table, at equal distance from each other; and each should have his sword at his left side, but should fasten his cloak so that his sword should not be seen. Then they went into the hall, thirty in number. Hauk went up to the king and saluted him, and the king bade him welcome. Then Hauk took the child Hakon, and set it on the king's knee. The king looks at the boy, and asks Hauk what

CHAP. III.

The Making of the Danelaw.

858-878.

the meaning of this is. Hauk replies, 'Harald the king bids thee foster his servant-girl's child. The king was in great anger, and seized a sword which lay beside him, and drew it as if he was going to kill the child. Hauk says, 'Thou hast borne him on thy knee, and thou canst murder him if thou wilt; but thou wilt not make an end of all King Harald's sons by so doing.' On that Hauk went out with all his men, and took the way direct to his ship and put to sea—for they were ready—and came back to King Harald. The king was highly pleased with this; for it is the common observation of all people that the man who fosters another's children is of less consideration than the other. From these transactions between the two kings it appears that each wanted to be held greater than the other; but in truth there was no injury to the dignity of either, for each was the upper king in his own kingdom till his dying day."

The Danelaw and England.

But whatever may have been the relation of the Danelaw to the Scandinavian homeland, there can be no doubt of the importance of this great settlement viewed in its relation to the country beyond its borders. It was a first step towards the conquest of England. The hard fighting of Wessex, the genius of Ælfred, had for the moment checked the conqueror's advance. But what he had won was never lost. Small as were the differences of manners and institutions between Englishman and Dane, the Danelaw preserved an individuality and character which even the re-conquest by the West Saxon kings failed to take from it. If it submitted for

a while to English rule, it remained a Danish and not an English land; and when the final attack of the Danish kings fell on England, the rising of the Danelaw in Swein's aid showed that half his work was done already to his hand. From the landing of Ivar to the landing of Cnut the attack of the Dane on Britain is really a continuous one; but the heritage of their victory was to pass into the hands of a later conqueror, and the bowing of all England to a Norman king is only the close of a work which began in the parting of Northern and Central England among the Danish holds.

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CHAPTER IV.

ÆLFRED.

878—901.

The weakness of the Danelaw.

MASTERS as they were of the bulk of Britain, the pressure of the Danes on the England that resisted them must in the end have proved irresistible had their military force remained undiminished and had their political faculty been as great as their genius for war. As we have seen, however, they showed as few traces of political faculty or of any power of national organization as in their own Scandinavia, while the number of their fighting men was lessening every day. Already the conquest of northern Britain had done much to save the south; for the attack of Guthrum on Wessex might have proved as successful as the attack of Ivar on Northumbria, had Ivar's men remained in the ranks of the Danish host instead of settling down as farmers beside the Ouse or the Trent. Peace too, and the Christianity which Guthrum embraced, yet further thinned the Danish ranks; and at the close of the last campaign against Wessex a large part of the invaders followed Hasting to seek better fortune in Gaul. But even those who remained on English ground clung loosely

to their new settlements. It was not Britain but Iceland that drew to it at this time the hearts of the northern rovers; and the English Danelaw often served as a mere stepping-stone between Norway and its offshoot in the northern seas. Of the names of the original settlers of Iceland which are recorded in the Landnama, its Domesday book, more than a half are those of men who had found an earlier settlement in the British Isles.[1]

Ælfred's work of restoration.

At the moment we have reached, however, even Ælfred's eye could hardly have discerned the weakness of the Danelaw. It was with little of a conqueror's exultation that the young king turned from his victories in the west. He looked on the peace he had won as a mere break in the struggle, and as a break that might at any moment come suddenly to an end. Even in the years of tranquillity which followed it there never was an hour when he felt safe against an inroad of the Danes over Watling Street, or a landing of pirates in the Severn. "Oh, what a happy man was he," he cries once, "that man that had a naked sword hanging over his head from a single thread—so as to me it always did!"[2] And yet peace was absolutely

[1] Dasent, translation of Njal's "Saga," Intr. p. xii. The most trustworthy accounts, such as that of the Landnamabok, of the first settlements in Iceland show how mixed the population of the British Islands then was. Besides the overwhelming numbers of the northmen, there are found men and women of Danish, Swedish, and Flemish descent who joined in the emigration from Britain to Iceland. (A.S.G.)

[2] Ælfred's Boethius, in Sharon Turner's "Hist. Anglo-Sax." vol. ii. p. 45.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

needful for the work that lay before him. If the deliverance of Wessex had shown the exhaustion of the Danes, Wessex itself was as utterly spent by fifty years of continuous effort, and above all by the last five years of deadly struggle. Law, order, the machinery of justice and government, had been weakened by the pirate storm. Schools and monasteries had for the most part perished. Many of the towns and villages lay wrecked or in ruin. There were whole tracts of country that lay wasted and without inhabitants after the Danish raids. Material and moral civilization indeed had alike to be revived. All however might be set right, as the king touchingly said, "if we have stillness;"[1] and in these first years of peace the work of restoration went rapidly on. Ælfred had to wrestle indeed with the penury of the royal Hoard; for so utterly had it been drained by the payments to the pirates and the cost of the recent struggle that the sons of Æthelwulf had been driven to the miserable expedient of debasing the currency, and it was not till Ælfred's later days that the coinage could be raised to a sounder standard.[2] He had to wrestle too yet harder with the sluggishness of his subjects. There were scarcely any who would undertake the slightest voluntary labour for the common benefit of the realm; persuasion had after long endurance to pass into command; and even commands were slowly and imperfectly carried out.[3] Great however as were the obstacles,

[1] Pref. to Pastoral Book (ed. Sweet).
[2] Robertson, "Hist. Essays," p. 64.
[3] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 59.

the work was done. Forts were built in places specially exposed to attack,[1] and wasted lands were colonized afresh. Bishop Denewulf of Winchester tells us how his land at Bedhampton "when my lord first let it to me was unprovided with cattle and laid waste by heathen folk; and I myself then provided the cattle, and there people were afterwards."[2] So too new abbeys were founded at Winchester and Shaftesbury; while the king's gratitude for his deliverance raised a religious house among the marshes of Athelney.

His military reforms.

Busy however as Ælfred was with the restoration of order and good government, his main efforts were directed to the military organization of his people.[3] He had learned during the years of hard fighting with which his life began, how unsuited the military system of the country had become to the needs of war as the Danes practised it. The one national army was the fyrd, a force which had already received in the Karolingian legislation the name of "landwehr" by which the German knows it still. The fyrd was in fact composed of the whole mass of free landowners who formed the folk: and to the last it could only be summoned by the voice of the folk-moot. In theory therefore such a host represented the whole available force of the country. But in actual warfare its attendance at the king's war-call was

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 58.

[2] Thorpe, "Diplomatarium," p. 162.

[3] Stubbs ("Const. Hist." i. 220 et seq.) has examined this subject; but we have little real information about it from contemporary documents.

CHAP. IV. Alfred. 878-901.

limited by practical difficulties. Arms were costly; and the greater part of the fyrd came equipped with bludgeons and hedge-stakes, which could do little to meet the spear and battleaxe of the invader. The very growth of the kingdom too had broken down the old military system. A levy of every freeman was possible when one folk warred with another folk, when a single march took the warrior to the border, and a single fight settled the matter between the tiny peoples. But now that folk after folk had been absorbed in great kingdoms, now that the short march had lengthened into distant expeditions, the short fight into long campaigns, it was hard to reconcile the needs of labour and of daily bread with the needs of war. Ready as he might be to follow the king to a fight which ended the matter, the farmer who tilled his own farm could serve only as long as his home-needs would suffer him. Custom had fixed his service at a period of two months. But as the industrial condition of the country advanced such a service became more and more difficult to enforce; even in Ine's day it was needful to fix heavy fines by law for men who "neglected the fyrd,"[1] and it broke down before the new conditions of warfare brought about by the strife with the Danes. However thoroughly they were beaten, the Danes had only to fall back behind their entrenchments, and wait in patience till the two months of the host's service were over, and the force which besieged them melted away. It was this which had again and again neutralized the successes of the West-Saxon kings.

[1] Ine's Law; Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 134-5.

It was the thinning of their own ranks in the hour of victory which forced Æthelred to conventions such as that of Nottingham, and Ælfred to conventions such as that of Exeter. The Dane in fact had changed the whole conditions of existing warfare. His forces were really standing armies, and a standing army of some sort was needed to meet them.

The thegn-class.

It was to provide such a force that the kings, from Ælfred to Æthelstan, gave a new extension to the class of thegns.[1] The growth of this class had formed, as we have seen, a marked part of the social revolution which had preceded the Danish wars. But a fresh importance had been given to the thegn by the shock which the structure of society had received from the long struggle. The free ceorl had above all felt the stress of war; in his need of a protector he was beginning to waive freedom for safety, and to "commend" himself to a thegn who would fight for him on condition that he followed his new "lord" as his "man" to the field. On the other hand, the lands wasted by the Danes were repeopled for the most part by the rural nobles, who provided the settlers with cattle and implements of culture, and in turn received service from them.[2] So rapid was this process that the class of free ceorls seems to have become all but extinguished, while that of thegns in its various degrees—king's thegn, the "baron" of the later feudalism; middle thegn, a predecessor of the country knight; and lesser thegn,

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 220 et seq.

[2] Cod. Dip. 1089. See Robertson's remarks, "Hist. Essays," Intr. p. liv., note.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

or all who possessed "soke," or private jurisdiction within their lands[1]—came to include the bulk of the landowners. The warlike temper of the thegnhood, its military traditions, its dependence on the king at whose summons it was bound to appear in the host, above all, its wealth, enabled it to bring to the field a force well equipped and provided with resources for a campaign; and it was with a sound instinct that Ælfred and his house seized on it as the nucleus of a new military system.

The new army.

Its special recognition as a leading element in our social organization belongs most probably to his days or to those of his son; and a law which we may look upon as part at least of the king's reforms gave the class of thegns at once a wide military extension by subjecting all owners of five hides of land to thegn service.[2] By a developement of the same principle, which we find established in later times, but whose origin we may fairly look for here, the whole country was divided into military districts, each five hides sending an armed man at the king's summons, and providing him with victuals and pay. Each borough, too, was rated as one or more such districts, and sent its due contingent, from one soldier to twelve. While this organization furnished the solid nucleus of a well-armed and permanent force, the duty of every freeman to join the host remained binding as before.

[1] Cnut's Laws, sec. 72. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 415.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws and Inst.," i. 191. "If a ceorl thrived so that he had fully five hides of his own land, church and kitchen, bell-house and 'burh'-gate-seat, and special duty in the king's hall, then was he thenceforth of thane-right worthy." Compare the "North-peoples' Law," secs. 5 and 9, *ibid.* pp. 187, 189.

But a simple reform met some at least of the difficulties which had as yet neutralized its effectiveness. On the resumption of the war we find that Ælfred had reorganized this national force by dividing the fyrd into two halves, each of which took by turns its service in the field, while the other half was exempted from field-service on condition of defending its own burhs and manning the rough entrenchments round every township.[1] A garrison and reserve force was thus added to the army on service; and the attendance of its warriors in the field could be more rigorously enforced.

Creation of a navy.

Further than this it was impossible to go. But the results of the new system were seen when the war broke out again in later years. The balance of warlike effectiveness passed from the invaders to the West Saxons. The fyrd became an army. In the skilful choice of positions, in the use of entrenchments, in rapidity of marching as well as in the shock of the battle-field, the Danes found themselves face to face with men who had patiently learned to be their match. The reorganization of the fyrd however was only a part of the task of military reform which Ælfred set himself. Alone among the rulers of his time he saw that the battle with the pirates must really be fought out upon the sea. Clear them from the land as he might, safety was impossible while every inch of blue water which washed the English coast was the northman's realm. But to win the sea was a harder task than to win back the land. Ælfred had only to organize the national army; he

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 894.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

had to create a national fleet. It was not indeed that Englishmen had ever lost their love for the sea; fishers and coasters abounded from the first along the Northumbrian shore, and ports such as Yarmouth and London can hardly have depended for traffic on foreign shipping. That no mention is made in earlier times of a "ship-fyrd," or assessment for the equipment of a fleet, is due to the fact that the struggles of early England had as yet been land struggles within the bounds of the country itself; but on the first outbreak of a foreign war, the war of Ecgfrith with Ireland, the Irish coast was ravaged by a fleet which must have been raised through a public contribution and manned by sailors accustomed to stormy seas.[1] In the south indeed no English navy seems to have existed during the earlier period of the northern attacks. The seizure of Wareham, however, spurred Ælfred to create a fleet.[2] He built larger ships than had as yet been used for warfare; and though forced by the greater skill of the northmen in sea matters to man his vessels with "pirates" from Friesland, their action did much to decide the fate of Exeter. This naval force was steadily developed.[3] In Ælfred's later years his fleet was strong enough to encounter the pirate-ships of the East Anglians; and in the reign of his son an English force of a hundred vessels asserted its mastery of the Channel.[4]

[1] A.D. 684. Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. 26. (A.S.G.)

[2] Asser, a. 877 (ed. Wise, p. 29):—"Jussit cymbas et galeas, id est, longas naves fabricari per regnum."

[3] See Eng. Chron. a. 897.

[4] We can hardly attribute to Ælfred the law that we find in force in Eadgar's day, by which a ship was due from every three

Ælfred and public justice.

A work of even greater difficulty than the reorganization of fyrd or fleet was the reorganization of public justice. Here Ælfred's efforts again fell in with the silent revolution which was undoing the older institutions of the English race. The change in the character and conception of the kingship, which was being brought about by the consolidation of the peoples into a single monarchy, as well as by the new tie of personal allegiance which bound men to the "lord of the land," was bringing with it a corresponding modification in the notions of justice and local government. The "peace of the folk" was becoming more and more, both in feeling and in fact, "the king's peace,"[1] while public justice was more and more conceived of as emanating from the power and action of the sovereign, rather than as a right inherent in the community itself. That this change of sentiment was of far older date than Ælfred's time we see from the language of the king. The conception of justice as inherent in the local jurisdictions or as flowing from the will of the people has wholly vanished. In Ælfred's mind justice flows to every court from the king himself, of whose judicial power each is representative, and who, as the fountain and source of justice, was bound on appeal to correct or confirm the judgement of all. "It is by gift from God and from me," he says to all who claim jurisdiction, "that you occupy your office and rank."[2]

hundreds, probably of the coast-shires; but some such law there must have been to account for Eadward's fleet.

[1] See Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 208-212.

[2] "Dei dono et meo sapientium ministerium et gradus usurpastis," Asser (ed. Wise), p. 70.

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

Not only did an appeal lie to him personally from every court, but we find him exercizing this jurisdiction through delegated judges, in whose action we see the first traces of the judicial authority of the Royal Council. "All the law dooms of his land that were given in his absence he used to keenly question, of whatever sort they were, just or unjust; and if he found any wrongdoing in them he would call the judges themselves before him, and either by his own mouth or by some other of his faithful men seek out why they gave doom so unrighteous, whether through ignorance or ill-will, or for love or from hate of any, or for greed of gold."[1] The law was in fact now the king's law: offences against it are offences against the king; and contempt of its courts is contempt of the king.[2]

Ælfred's difficulties.

This new conception of justice received a powerful impulse from the growing inefficiency of the "folk's justice" itself. Ælfred's main work, like that of his successor, was to enforce submission to the justice of hundred-moot and shire-moot alike on noble and ceorl, "who were constantly at obstinate variance with one another in the folk-moots before ealdorman and reeve, so that hardly any one of them would grant that to be true doom that had been judged for doom

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 70: "Nam omnia pene totius suæ regionis judicia, quæ in absentiâ suâ fiebant, sagaciter investigabat, qualia fierent, justa aut etiam injusta; aut vero si aliquam in illis judiciis iniquitatem intelligere posset, leniter advocatos illos ipsos judices, aut per se ipsum, aut per alios suos fideles quoslibet, interrogabat," &c.

[2] "Ofer-hyrnesse;" first heard of in Ll. Eadw. I. sec. i. (Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. p. 161), and so dating from Ælfred's day.

by the ealdorman and reeves."[1] But even the doom of the folk-moot was subject on appeal to the justice of the king.[2] Judicial business, in fact, occupied a large part of Ælfred's time. He was busied, says his biographer, "day and night" in the correction of local injustice, "for in that whole kingdom the poor had no helpers, or few, save the king himself."[3] The work was one which brought with it bitter resistance, and the strife even with men of his own house for law and justice left pain and disappointment in Ælfred's heart. "Desirest thou power?" he asks in one of his writings. "But thou shalt never obtain it without sorrow, sorrow from strange folk, and yet keener sorrows from thine own kindred."[4] "Hardship and sorrow!" he breaks out again; "not a king but would wish to be without these if he could. But I know that he cannot."[5]

English Mercia.

Gloom or anxiety however failed even for a moment to check his activity in the work of restoration.[6]

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 69. "Nobilium et ignobilium . . . qui sæpissime in concionibus comitum et præpositorum pertinacissime inter se dissentiebant, ita ut pene nullus eorum quicquid a comitibus et præpositis judicatum fuisset, verum esse concederet." As Stubbs ("Const. Hist." i. 112, note) points out, this shows "that ealdorman and gerefa, eorl and ceorl, had their places in these courts," and that, "although the officers might declare the law, the ultimate determination rested in each case with the suitors."

[2] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 70.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 69.

[4] Ælfred's Boethius, in Sharon Turner's "Hist. Anglo-Sax." vol. ii. p. 43.

[5] *Ib.* p. 45.

[6] Later tradition (Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. p. 186) attributed to Ælfred the institution of the shire, the hundred, and the tithing; and Professor Stubbs ("Const. Hist." i. 112) suggests

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

He was as busy without Wessex as within. In the division of Britain at the peace of Wedmore he had saved from the grasp of the Danes the western portion of the Mercian kingdom, the upper valleys of the Thames and the Trent, the whole valley of the Severn with the outlier of the Hwiccan territory in Arden, and the more northerly region of our Shropshire and Cheshire. Of what vital importance this tract was to prove we shall see in the after part of our story. It was from it that Ælfred drew the teachers who began the intellectual and religious restoration of the rescued realm. It was from it that his daughter in later days advanced to the conquest of Mid-Britain. It was of more immediate value as parting the Welshmen from the Danes, and thus paving the way for that complete reduction of the former which was the necessary prelude to any effective struggle with the settlers of the Danelaw. But what immediately fronted the young king was the question of its government. The question was one of great moment,

a real ground for this. "The West-Saxon shires appear in history under their permanent names, and with a shire organization much earlier than those of Mercia and Northumberland; while Kent, Essex, and East Anglia had throughout an organization derived from their old status as kingdoms. It is in Wessex, further, that the hundredal division is supplemented by that of the tithing. It may then be argued that the whole hundredal system radiates from the West-Saxon kingdom, and that the variations mark the gradual extension of that power as it won its way to supremacy under Egbert or Ethelwulf, or recovered territory from the Danes under Alfred and Edward, Athelstan, Edmund, Edred, and Edgar. If this be allowed, the claim of Alfred, as founder, not of the hundred-law, but of the hundredal divisions, may rest on something firmer than legend."

not only in its bearing on Mercia, but in its bearing on the future of England itself. The royal stocks, once the centres and representatives of the separate folks, were dying out one by one. In the earlier days of Ecgberht the only kings that retained political life were those of Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex, with the tributary realms of East Anglia and of Kent. Of these the Kentish kings soon came to an end, while the strife over the succession in Northumbria sprang from the virtual extinction of its royal stock. But the action of Ecgberht even in the moment of his triumph showed that so long as the royal races existed at all any real union of the English peoples in one political body was practically impossible.

The Mercian ealdormanry.

The difficulty indeed could hardly have been solved save by some violent shock; and the shock was given by the coming of the Danes. Before fifty years were over the royal houses of Northumbria, of East Anglia, of Mercia, were brought to an end. The two claimants to the northern throne perished in the battle of York. The martyrdom of Eadmund closed the East-Anglian line; while that of Mercia ended in the flight of Burhred to Rome before the inroad of Guthrum. It was thus that the position of Ælfred differed radically from that of Ecgberht; for even had he wished to restore the mere supremacy over Mercia which Ecgberht had wielded, he had no royal house through which to restore it. He was driven in fact by the very force of things to be not merely a West-Saxon over-lord of Mercia, but a Mercian king. He made no attempt to fuse Mercia into Wessex; it remained a separate though dependent

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

state with its Mercian witenagemot and Mercian ruler, Æthelred, who may have sprung from the stock of its older kings. But Æthelred was simply Ealdorman of the Mercians. Though Ælfred uses in his dealings with Mercia only the general title of "King," it was as King of the Mercians that he acted; their Ealdorman owned him as his lord, and their Witan met by his licence. How thoroughly Ælfred asserted royal rights in Mid-Britain may be seen indeed from his Mercian coinage. Coinage in the old world was the unquestioned test of kingship, and a mint which Ælfred set up at Oxford[1] within the borders of the Mercian Ealdormanry proves even more than the submissive words of Witan or Ealdorman the reality of his rule. In fact Wessex and Mercia were now united, as Wessex and Kent had long been united, by their allegiance to the same ruler; and the foundation of a national monarchy was laid in the personal loyalty of Jute and Engle and Saxon alike to the house of Cerdic.[2]

[1] "We have in the British Museum," Mr. Barclay V. Head has been good enough to write to me, "a whole series of Ælfred's coins, struck at various mints, and among them are some discovered some twenty or thirty years ago at Cuerdale, which read 'ORSNAFORDA.' It is usual to attribute these to Oxford." On a subsequent personal examination however he finds that the word has been misread, and is clearly "OKSNAFORDA," which must be taken as the earliest authentic form of the town's name. No written evidence for Oxford's existence can be found before its mention in the Chronicle in 912 in the following reign.

[2] We find Æthelred an Ealdorman under Burhred, c. 872-4 (Kemb. Cod. Dipl. 304). His first extant charter under Ælfred is of 880, as "dux et patricius gentis Merciorum," and already

Ælfred's laws.

Important as was the union of Wessex and Mercia in itself as a step towards national unity, it led to a step yet more important in the fusion of the customary codes of the English peoples into a common law. The sphere of the written codes might be narrow in relation to the whole body of customary law, but they had by Ælfred's day come to be regarded as its representatives, and thus to be specially representative of the tribal life which the customary law embodied. As king therefore of Wessex, of Kent, and of Mercia, Ælfred found himself an administrator of three separate codes, whose differences, however slight, reflected the distinctions which held each of these states apart from the

married to Æthelflæd, who signs it. In 884 he signs as "Merciorum gentis ducatum gubernans" (Cod. Dipl. 1066); in 888 as "procurator in dominio regni Merciorum" (*ib.* 1068). The grant of 880 is "cum licentiâ et impositione manus Ælfredi regis, una cum testimonio et consensu seniorum ejusdem gentis (Merciorum)." "Ælfred rex" signs first, then "Æthered dux," then "Æthelflæd conjunx" (Cod. Dip. 311) Another grant in 883 is with Ælfred's "leave and witness" (*ib.* 313). And so, in 896, when Æthelred summons the Mercian Witan, "that did he with king Ælfred's witness and leave" (*ib.* 1073). In a charter however of 901 (Cod. Dip. 330), Ælfred's last year of reign, there is no mention of Ælfred, but of "Æthered Æd(elflædque) dei gratiâ monarchiam Merciorum tenentes honorificeque gubernantes et defendentes;" the grant is made solely "cum licentiâ et testimonio pantorum procerum Merciorum;" and signed "Ego Æthered, Ego Æthelflæd," without titles. This does not however represent a new position taken by Æthelred at Ælfred's death and Eadward's accession, though it is notable that Æthelweard, a. 894 (lib. iv. c. 3), calls him "rex," for in 903 we find a Mercian ealdorman asking a grant from "Eadwardum regem, Æthelredum quoque et Æthelfledam, qui tunc principatum et potestatem gentis Merciæ sub prædicto rege tenuerunt" (Cod. Dipl. 1081).

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

other. Of a new legislation, or of the bringing a larger sphere of English life within the scope of the written law, the king had no thought. The very notion of new legislation indeed, ungrounded on custom, was without hold on him or his people. "I durst not," he says frankly, "venture to set down in writing much of my own, for it was unknown to me what of it would please those who should come after us." All that he could venture on was a certain amount of rejection; "many of those dooms which seemed to me not good, I rejected them by the counsel of my witan;" but the main work was simply a work of compilation.[1] "Those things which I met with, either of the days of Ine, my kinsman, or of Offa, king of the Mercians, or of Æthelberht, who first among the English race received baptism, those which seemed to me the rightest, those I have gathered together and rejected the others."[2] But unpretending as the work might seem, its importance was great. With it began the conception of a national law. The notion of separate systems of tribal customs passed away with the weakening of the notion of tribal life; and the codes of Wessex, Mercia, and Kent blended in the doom-book of a common England.

[1] Of the seventy-seven clauses of Ælfred's law, fifty-three relate to personal injuries; these are taken from the Kentish codes, especially that of Æthelberht, with but slight change save in the amount of the fine. The rest are mainly borrowed from Ine, whose agricultural laws however are wholly omitted; and there are a few miscellaneous laws, which may be Ælfred's own, or taken from the lost code of Offa.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws and Instit." i. 59.

The Danes in Frankland.

The king's work of peace, however, was now drawing to an end. We have seen how anxiously, while girding himself for the coming strife, Ælfred was looking out through these six years of quiet, from 878 to 884, over the West-Saxon frontier.[1] What helped him to give rest to his land—as he knew well—was not only the peace of Wedmore, but the work which the pirates had found to do on the other side of the Channel; for their defeat in England had thrown them back on their old field of attack in the land of the Franks. The establishment of the Danelaw gave them a base of operations for descents on the opposite coast,[2] and when the host under Guthrum sailed home to East Anglia after its repulse from Wessex, it was in order to sail off again to the Scheldt. The close of the struggle in England threw in fact the whole weight of the pirate onset on the Franks. It fell above all on northern Frankland, and soon the Scheldt, the Meuse, and the Rhine were full of pirate squadrons. The Frank kings fought bravely as of old, though their strength was still broken by the dynastic quarrels which the dream of restoring the empire of Charles the Great stirred up perpetually among his descendants. But the resistance of Wessex roused a new vigour among its neighbours. Lewis the German

[1] Among other causes for anxiety was the desertion of Englishmen to the Danes. In Cod. Dip. 1078, we hear of an ealdorman, Wulfhere, who "suum dominum regem Ælfredum et patriam, ultra jusjurandum quam regi et suis omnibus optimatibus juraverat, dereliquit." This is a very early instance of the oath of allegiance.

[2] Eng. Chron. 880-4.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

fought the pirates hard on the Scheldt, while two grandsons of Charles the Bald, Lewis and Carloman, who mounted the throne of the West Franks in the year after the peace of Wedmore, checked Guthrum by a victory at Saucourt on the Somme. The contest however drew larger hosts to Guthrum's aid, and an overpowering force poured up the Rhine and harried Lorraine as far as Aachen. Lewis the German and Lewis of the West Franks alike passed away in this hour of gloom, while Carloman, still battling with the pirate host as it poured from Aachen over Western Frankland, died in 884.

Their attack on England.

But the hard fighting told. The old ease with which the northmen passed from land to land as resistance drove them to seek fresh ground for their forays was coming fast to an end. On both sides of the sea their hosts found men ready to meet blow with blow. When the pirates who had quitted the Loire steered for Wessex, Ælfred's new fleet was ready for them; and a brisk engagement, in which four of their ships were sunk or captured, drove them from the coast.[1] The bulk of their hosts, who had followed Hasting to northern Frankland, had to fight a stubborn fight at Haslo against the Emperor Charles. Before blows such as these the Wikings were driven to draw their whole force together, and in 884 the fleet of the northmen was concentrated in the Somme. To rest idle however was to starve, and part of their host soon moved to Lorraine, while part pushed up the Thames and beset Rochester.[2] But the old days of panic were over, and Rochester held bravely out till

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 882. [2] Eng. Chron. a. 885.

Ælfred could hurry to its relief and drive its besiegers to the sea with the loss of their horses.[1] Short as the campaign had been, it was to have important results. Though the repulse of the pirates had been quick enough to hinder a general rising of the Danelaw in their aid, the Danes of Guthrum's kingdom had already set aside the Frith of Wedmore and given help to their brethren.[2] No sooner, therefore, had the pirate-force retreated from Rochester than West-Saxon ships from Kent appeared off the East-Anglian coast to punish this breach of faith. A squadron of the freebooters was captured at the mouth of the Stour, and its crews slain. The insult was avenged by a sudden and successful rally of the East Anglians in which the king's ships were destroyed, but the measures which Ælfred took in the next year show that the rally was followed by submission, and that a fresh peace had been made between the combatants on terms that implied Guthrum's recognition of the superior strength of the West-Saxon king.

Ælfred and London.

The Essex which the Danes had occupied till now as a dependency of their East-Anglian realm must have been the older kingdom of the East-Saxons, a tract which included not only the modern shire that bears their name, but our Middlesex and Hertfordshire, and whose centre, or "mother-city," was London. London had as yet played little part in English history; indeed for nearly half a century after its conquest by the East-Saxons it wholly disappears

[1] "Equis, quos de Francia secum adduxerant."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 37. This shows the size of their ships.

[2] Æthelweard, a. 885, lib. iv. c. 3.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

from our view. Its position, however, was such that traffic could not long fail to re-create the town, and the advantages which had drawn trade and population to the Roman Londinium must have already been at work in repeopling the English London. Its growth however was for a while to be arrested; for the conquest of the town by Ecgberht in his general reunion of the English states was quickly followed by the struggle with the Danes. To London the war brought all but ruin; so violent in fact was the shock to its life that its very bishoprick seemed for a time to cease to exist.[1] The Roman walls must have been broken and ruined, for we hear of no resistance such as that which in later days made the city England's main bulwark against northern attack; and in 851 it was plundered by the marauders, who again wintered at Fulham in 880, when the city was probably subjected anew to their devastations. At the peace of Wedmore it must have been left like the rest of Essex in the hands of Guthrum. But with the war of 886 came its deliverance, for at the close of the strife with East Anglia we find London in Ælfred's hands. Whether he had won it by actual siege or no,[2] he "peopled" or "settled" it, and handed

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 275.

[2] "Obsidetur a rege Ælfredo urbs Lundonii," says Æthelweard; but Earle ("Parallel Chron." p. 310) argues that this is a mere misconception of the Chron. a. 886, "gesette Ælfred cyning Lundenburg," Æthelweard substituting "besette" for "gesette," "besieged" for "colonized" or "peopled." All the later authorities follow the Chronicle, or Asser's "restauravit et habitabilem fecit." Asser (ed. Wise), p. 52.

it over to the Mercian ealdorman Æthelred to hold against the Danes.

The division of Essex.

The cession of London, however, was only part of the sacrifice by which Guthrum won peace. The geographical boundaries which it names show that the "Frith between Ælfred and Guthrum," which has commonly been identified with the Frith concluded at Wedmore, is really the peace of 886; and that its provisions represent a territorial readjustment by which East Anglia bought peace from the king. The older Essex was broken into two parts by an artificial line of demarcation between Guthrum's realm and the Mercian ealdormanry, a line which passed from the Thames up the Lea as far as its sources near Hertford, thence struck straight over the Chilterns, and down their slopes into the valley of the Ouse at Bedford, and thence followed the countless bends of Ouse to the point where its course was cut by the line of the Watling Street near Stony Stratford.[1] In other words, the western half of the East-Saxon kingdom was torn away from the eastern half to form a district

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 153. At this point where the line hit the Watling Street the territories of Guthrum and Mercia ceased to march together, and it was therefore needless further to define the boundaries of either. But the border-line refers strictly to these two realms; and the common reading of it, as if from this point Watling Street formed the bound between the rest of the Danelaw, *i.e.* the territory of the Five Boroughs and Mercia, has no foundation in the actual text of the frith. There must have been a separate frith between the Five Boroughs and English Mercia, no doubt with a like definition of the boundary line, as there was certainly such a frith between Wessex and Northumbria (Eng. Chron. a. 911), but both are lost.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

around London.[1] The division may be but the return to an earlier arrangement; for some such parting must have taken place when Ecgberht joined Essex to his "eastern kingdom" of Kent, while London was still left in Mercian hands. This arrangement however was so soon put an end to by the reunion of London and Essex in the kingdom of Guthrum, that it would have left hardly a trace of its existence but for the permanent severance which was now made by the Frith of 886. It was this which gave both territories the shape which they still retain, which fixed the border of Essex at the Lea, and annexed to London that district, which from its position between West Saxon and East Saxon, either now or at some earlier time, was known as the land of the Middlesexe.

Position of the Danes reversed.

In a military point of view the recovery of the Thames valley, with the winning and fortification of London, was of great moment, for it closed to the Danes that water-way by which in past times the pirates had advanced to the attack of Wessex. Its military results however proved to be the least results of the war. Till now Ælfred's victories had seemed

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 5, says of London, "Quæ est sita in aquilonari ripa Tamesis fluminis, in confinio East-Seaxum, et Middle-Seaxum, sed tamen ad East-Seaxum illa civitas cum veritate pertinet." It may be doubted whether "Middle-Sexe" were heard of before this assignment of the old East-Saxon borderland as a "Pagus" for London in 886, when the need arose for a distinguishing name for its inhabitants. I shall however deal afterwards with the bearing of this division on the general question of the "shires;" here we need only note that the question has hardly arisen, as the line of the Frith is far from representing the later lines of the shires along its course.

a mere saving of Wessex, a temporary repulse of the Dane from a part of Britain. But the character of the war, as it reopened in 885, showed how much greater a work than this had been done at Athelney and Edington. With the Frith of Wedmore the whole military position of the Danes had in fact been reversed. From an attitude of attack they had been thrown back on an attitude of defence. The northmen had failed to crush the house of Cerdic, and already it seemed as if the house of Cerdic was turning to crush the northmen. The driving off of the pirates, the attack on East Anglia, the recovery of London and the lands about it, showed England that in Wessex and its king the country possessed a force not only strong enough to withstand the Danes, but strong enough to take in hand the undoing of what the Danes had done.

Rise of national sentiment.

The consciousness of such a change at once made itself felt. If any date can be given for the foundation of a national monarchy, as distinct from the earlier supremacy of king over king, it is the year 886. In that year, says the chronicle, "all the Angel-cyn turned to Ælfred, save those that were under bondage to Danish men."[1] The old tribal jealousies were, if not destroyed, at least subordinated to the sense of a common patriotism, and a sense of national existence began from this moment to give life and vigour to the new conception of a national sovereignty. If the Dane had struck down the dominion of Ecgberht, it was the Dane who was to bring about even more than its restoration.

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 886.

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

Set face to face with a foreign foe, the English people was waking to a consciousness of its own existence; the rule of the stranger was crushing provincial jealousies and deepening the sense of a common nationality; while the question of political and military supremacy was settled as it had never been settled before. Wessex alone had repulsed the Dane. The West-Saxons had not only kept their own freedom; they had become the only possible champions of the freedom of other Englishmen. The old jealousy of their greatness was lost in a craving for their aid, for it was plain that deliverance from the invader, if it came at all, must come through the sword of the West-Saxon king. It was no wonder then that the eyes of Northumbrian and Mercian turned more and more to Ælfred, or that his work gleamed over England like a light of hope. His slow patient undoing of the evil which the Danes had done in Wessex was a promise of its undoing throughout the nation at large.

Intellectual ruin of England.

But if the growth of this sentiment gave a moral strength to Ælfred's position, the sentiment itself gained largeness and dignity from the conception of national rule which it found embodied in the king. Hardly had this second breathing-space been won in the long conflict with the enemy than Ælfred turned anew to his work of restoration. The ruin that the Danes had wrought had been no mere material ruin. When they first appeared off her shores, England stood in the forefront of European culture; her scholars, her libraries, her poetry, had no rivals in the western world. But all, or

nearly all, of this culture had disappeared. The art and learning of Northumbria had been destroyed at a blow; and throughout the rest of the Danelaw the ruin was as complete. The very Christianity of Mid-Britain was shaken; the sees of Dunwich and Lindsey came to an end; at Lichfield and Elmham the succession of bishops became broken and irregular; even London hardly kept its bishop's stool. But its letters and civilization were more than shaken; they had vanished in the sack of the great abbeys of the Fen. Even in Wessex, which ranked as the least advanced of the English kingdoms, Ælfred could recall that he saw as a child "how the churches stood filled with treasures and books, and there was also a great multitude of God's servants;" but this was "before it had all been ravaged and burned."[1] "So clean was learning decayed among English folk," says the king, "that very few were there on this side Humber that could understand their rituals in English, or translate aught out of Latin into English, and I ween there were not many beyond the Humber. So few of them were there, that I cannot bethink me of a single one south of Thames when I came to the kingdom."[2] It was in fact only in the fragment of Mercia which had been saved from the invaders that a gleam of the old intellectual light

[1] "I remembered also how I saw, before it had all been ravaged and burned, how the churches throughout the whole of England stood filled with treasures and books, and there was also a great multitude of God's servants."—Pref. to Ælfred's translation of Gregory's Pastoral, ed. Sweet.

[2] Pref. to Pastoral (ed. Sweet).

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

Ælfred's intellectual work.

lingered in the school which Bishop Werfrith had gathered round him at Worcester.

It is in his efforts to repair this intellectual ruin that we see Ælfred's conception of the work he had to do. The Danes had no doubt brought with them much that was to enrich the temper of the coming England, a larger and freer manhood, a greater daring, a more passionate love of personal freedom, better seamanship and a warmer love of the sea, a keener spirit of traffic, and a range of trade-ventures which dragged English commerce into a wider world. But their work of destruction threatened to rob England of things even more precious than these. In saving Wessex Ælfred had saved the last refuge of all that we sum up in the word civilization, of that sense of a common citizenship and nationality, of the worth of justice and order and good government, of the harmony of individual freedom in its highest form with the general security of society, of the need for a co-operation of every moral and intellectual force in the developement both of the individual man and of the people as a whole, which England had for two centuries been either winning from its own experience or learning from the tradition of the past. It was because literature embodied what was worthiest in this civilization that Ælfred turned to the restoration of letters. He sought in Mercia for the learning that Wessex had lost.[1] He made the Mercian Plegmund Archbishop of Canterbury;[2] Werfrith, Bishop of Worcester, helped him in his

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 46.
[2] Eng. Chron. (Peterborough), a. 890.

own literary efforts, and two Mercian priests, Æthelstan and Werwulf, became his chaplains and tutors. But it was by example as well as precept that the king called England again to the studies it had abandoned. "What of all his troubles troubled him the most," he used to say, "was that when he had the age and ability to learn he could find no masters." But now that masters could be had he worked day and night.[1] He stirred nowhere without having some scholar by him. He remained true indeed to his own tongue and his own literature. His memory was full of English songs, as he had caught them from singers' lips; and he was not only fond of repeating them but taught them carefully to his children.[2] But he knew

[1] "Die noctuque, quandocunque aliquam licentiam haberet, libros ante se recitare talibus imperabat, non enim unquam sine aliquo eorum se esse pateretur, quapropter pene omnium librorum notitiam habebat, quamvis per seipsum aliquid adhuc de libris intelligere non posset; non enim adhuc aliquid legere inceperat."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 46.

[2] "Et Saxonicos libros recitare, et maxime Saxonica carmina memoriter discere, aliis imperare, et solus assidue pro viribus studiosissime non desinebat."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 43. His children, Eadward and Ælfthryth, were not left "sine liberali disciplina," "nam et psalmos et Saxonicos libros et maxime Saxonica carmina studiose didicere, et frequentissime libris utuntur."—*Ib.* p. 43. In the palace-school "utriusque linguæ libri, Latinæ scilicet et Saxonicæ assidue legebantur."—*Ib.* p. 43. So of his nobles, if any were too ignorant or old to profit by "liberalibus studiis," "Suum si haberet filium, aut etiam aliquem propinquum suum, vel etiam si aliter non habeat suum proprium hominem liberum vel servum, quem ad lectionem longe ante promoverat, libros ante se die nocteque quandocunque unquam ullam haberet licentiam Saxonicos imperabat recitare."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 71. Stray references throughout his writings show his familiarity with the Old English hero-legends: "Where are now the bones of Weland?" he renders the "Fabricii ossa" of Boethius.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

that the actual knowledge of the world must be sought elsewhere. Before many years were over he had taught himself Latin,[1] and was soon skilled enough in it to render Latin books into the English tongue.

Asser

His wide sympathy sought for aid in this work from other lands than his own. "In old time," the king wrote sadly,[2] "men came hither from foreign lands to seek for instruction; and now, if we are to have it, we can only get it from abroad." He sought it among the West-Franks and the East-Franks; Grimbald came from St. Omer to preside over the new abbey he founded at Winchester, while John the Old-Saxon was fetched, it may be from the Westphalian abbey of Corbey, to rule the monastery he set up at Athelney.[3] A Welsh bishop was drawn with the same end to Wessex; and the account he has left of his visit and doings at the court brings us face to face with the king. "In those days," says Bishop Asser, "I was called by the king from the western and furthest border of Britain and came to Saxonland; and when in a long journey I set about approaching him I arrived in company with guides of that people as far as the region of the Saxons who lie on the right hand of one's road, which in the Saxon tongue is called Sussex. There for the

[1] Either in 885 or 887. See Pauli, "Life of Ælfred," p. 169. "Non enim adhuc legere inceperat," says Asser (ed. Wise), p. 46, apparently of the time soon after the Frith of Wedmore. I take "legere" to have its usual meaning, that of reading and translating Latin.

[2] Pref. to Pastoral Book.

[3] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 61.

first time I saw the king in the king's house which is named Dene. And when I had been received by him with all kindness, he began to pray me earnestly to devote myself to his service and be of his household, and to leave for his sake all that I possessed on the western side of Severn, promising to recompense me with greater possessions." Asser however refused to forsake his home, and Ælfred was forced to be content with a promise of his return six months after. "And when he seemed satisfied with this reply, I gave him my pledge to return in a given time, and after four days took horse again and set out on my return to my country. But after I had left him and reached the city of Winchester a dangerous fever laid hold of me, and for twelve months and a week I lay with little hope of life. And when at the set time I did not return to him as I had promised, he sent messengers to me to hasten my riding to him and seek for the cause of my delay. But as I could not take horse I sent another messenger back to him to show him the cause of my tarrying, and to declare that if I recovered from my infirmity I would fulfil the promise I had made. When my sickness then had departed, I devoted myself to the king's service on these terms, that I should stay with him for six months in every year if I could, or if not I should stay three months in Britain and three months in Saxon-land. So it came about that I made my way to him in the king's house which is called Leonaford, and was greeted by him with all honour. And that time I staid with him in his court through eight months, during which I read to him whatever books

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

he would that we had at hand; for it is his constant wont, whatever be the hindrances either in mind or body, by day and by night, either himself to read books aloud or to listen to others reading them."[1]

Birth of English Prose.

The work, however, which most told upon English culture was done not by these scholars but by Ælfred himself. The king's aim was simple and practical. He desired that "every youth now in England that is freeborn and has wealth enough be set to learn, as long as he is not fit for any other occupation, till they well know how to read English writing; and let those be afterwards taught in the Latin tongue who are to continue learning and be promoted to a higher rank."[2] For this purpose he set up, like Charles the Great, a school for the young nobles at his own court.[3] Books were needed for them as well as for the priests, to the bulk of whom Latin was a strange tongue, and the king set himself to provide English books for these readers. It was in carrying out this simple purpose that Ælfred changed the whole front of English literature. In the paraphrase of Cadmon, in the epic of Beowulf, in the verses of Northumbrian singers, in battle-songs and ballads, English poetry had already risen to a grand and vigorous life. But English prose hardly existed. Since Theodore's time theology had been the favourite study of English scholars, and theology naturally took a Latin shape. Historical literature followed Bæda's lead in finding

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), pp. 47-51.
[2] Pref. to Pastoral (ed. Sweet).
[3] Asser (ed. Wise), pp. 43, 44.

a Latin vehicle of expression.[1] Saints' lives, which had now become numerous, were as yet always written in Latin. It was from Ælfred's day that this tide of literary fashion suddenly turned. English prose started vigorously into life. Theology stooped to an English dress.[2] History became almost wholly vernacular.[3] The translation of Latin saint-lives into English became one of the most popular literary trades of the day. Even medicine found English interpreters. A national literature in fact sprang suddenly into existence which was without parallel in the western world.[4]

[1] "The charters anterior to Ælfred are invariably in Latin." Palgrave, "Engl. Commonw." i. 56.

[2] From the time of Ælfred's version of "The Pastoral Book," religious works like Ælfric's Homilies are written in English. In this vernacular theology England stood alone.

[3] From the days of Ælfred to the eve of the Norman Conquest, when the "Vita Haroldi" forms an exception (for the Encomium Emmæ is hardly of English origin), we possess only a single Latin historian, the ealdorman Æthelweard.

[4] "The old English writers," says Mr. Sweet, "did not learn the art of prose composition from Latin models; they had a native historical prose, which shows a gradual elaboration and improvement, quite independent of Latin or any other foreign influence. This is proved by an examination of the historical pieces inserted into the Chronicle. The first of these, the account of the death of Cynewulf and Cynehard, is composed in the abrupt disconnected style of oral conversation: it shows prose composition in its rudest and most primitive form, and bears a striking resemblance to the earliest Icelandic prose. In the detailed narrative of Ælfred's campaign and sea-fights the style assumes a different aspect; without losing the force and simplicity of the earlier pieces, it becomes refined and polished to a high degree, and yet shows no traces of foreign influence. Accordingly, in the 'Orosius,' the only translation of Ælfred's which

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.
Ælfred's translations.

It is thus that in the literatures of modern Europe that of England leads the way. The Romance tongues, the tongues of Italy, Gaul, and Spain, were only just emerging into definite existence when Ælfred wrote. Ulfilas, the first Teutonic prose writer, found no successors among his Gothic people; and none of the German folk across the sea were to possess a prose literature of their own for centuries to come. English therefore was not only the first Teutonic literature, it was the earliest prose literature of the modern world. And at the outset of English literature stands the figure of Ælfred. The mighty roll of books that fills our libraries opens with the translations of the king. He took his books as he found them; they were in fact the popular manuals of his day; the compilation of "Orosius," which was then the one accessible handbook of universal history, the works of Bæda, the "Consolation" of Boethius, the Pastoral Book of Pope Gregory. "I wondered greatly," he says, "that of those good men who were aforetime all over England and who had learned perfectly these

from the similarity of its subject admits of a direct comparison, we find almost exactly the same language and style as in the contemporary historical pieces of the Chronicle. In the Bede, where the ecclesiastical prevails over the purely historical, the general style is less national, less idiomatic than in the 'Orosius,' and in purely theological works, such as the 'Pastoral,' the influence of the Latin original reaches its height. Yet even here there seems to be no attempt to engraft Latin idioms on the English version; the foreign influence is only indirect, chiefly showing itself in the occasional clumsiness that results from the difficulty of expressing and defining abstract ideas in a language unused to theological and metaphysical subtleties."—Introduction to Pastoral Book (E. E. Text Soc.), p. xli.

books, none would translate any part into their own language. But I soon answered myself and said, 'They never thought that men would be so reckless, and learning so fallen.'" As it was, however, the books had to be rendered into English by the king himself, with the help of the scholars he had gathered round him. "When I remembered," he says in his preface to the Pastoral Book,[1] "how the knowledge of Latin had formerly decayed throughout England, and yet many could read English writing, I began among other various and manifold troubles of this kingdom, to translate into English the book which is called in Latin Pastoralis, and in English Shepherd's Book, sometimes word by word, and sometimes according to the sense, as I had learnt it from Plegmund my archbishop, and Asser my bishop, and Grimbald my mass-priest, and John my mass-priest. And when I had learnt it as I could best understand it, and as I could most clearly interpret it, I translated it into English."

Their character.

Ælfred was too wise a man not to own the worth of such translations in themselves. The Bible, he urged with his cool common sense, had told on the nations through versions in their own tongues. The Greeks knew it in Greek. The Romans knew it in Latin. Englishmen might know it, as they might know the other great books of the world, in their own English. "I think it better therefore to render some books, that are most needful for men to know, into the language that we may all understand." But Ælfred showed himself more than a translator. He

[1] Ælfred's Pastoral Book (ed. Sweet).

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

became an editor for his people. Here he omitted, there he expanded. He enriched his first translation, the "Orosius," by a sketch of new geographical discoveries in the north. He gave a West-Saxon form to his selections from Bæda. In one place he stops to explain his theory of government, his wish for a thicker population, his conception of national welfare as consisting in a due balance of the priest, the thegn, and the churl. The mention of Nero spurs him to an outbreak against abuses of power. The cold acknowledgement of a Providence by Boethius gives way to an enthusiastic acknowledgement of the goodness of God.[1] As Ælfred writes his large-hearted nature flings off its royal mantle, and he talks as a man to men. "Do not blame me," he prays with a charming simplicity, "if any know Latin better than I, for every man must say what he says and do what he does according to his ability."[2]

The English Chronicle.

Among his earliest undertakings was an English version of Bæda's history;[3] and it was probably the making of this version which suggested the thought of a work which was to be memorable in our literature.[4] Winchester, like most other episcopal monasteries,

[1] See the instances given from his "Boethius" by Sharon Turner, "Hist. Ang. Sax." ii. cap. 2.

[2] Pref. to the "Boethius," Pauli's Ælfred, p. 174.

[3] Pauli ("Life of Ælfred," p. 180) shows that the Bæda must have preceded the English rendering of the Chronicle, as this follows the version of Bæda in one of its most characteristic blunders.

[4] In this sketch of the earlier history of the English Chronicle I have mainly followed Mr. Earle ("Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel," 1865, Introduction), whose minute analysis has placed the question of its composition on a critical basis.

seems to have had its own Bishop's Roll, a series of meagre and irregular annals in the Latin tongue, for the most part mere jottings of the dates when West-Saxon bishop and West-Saxon King mounted throne and bishop-stool. The story of this Roll and its aftergrowths has been ingeniously traced by modern criticism; and the general conclusions at which it has arrived seem probable enough. The entries of the Roll were posted up at uncertain intervals and with more or less accuracy from the days of the first West-Saxon bishop, Birinus. Meagre as they were, these earlier annals were historical in character and free from any mythical intermixture; but save for a brief space in Ine's day they were purely West-Saxon,[1] and with the troubles which followed Ine's death they came to an end altogether. It was not until the revival of West-Saxon energy under Ecgberht that any effort was made to take up the record again and to fill up the gap that its closing had made.[2] But Swithun was

[1] Earle finds a change in the Chronicle at 682. Ine reigned from 688. The annals still remained mere notes of the death and accession of kings and bishops, but were no longer confined to Wessex, including from this point like events in Northumbria, Mercia, and Kent (Earle, Intr. xi.). For the difficulties in the dates throughout this portion, from 682 to 755, see Stubbs' preface to his edition of "Roger of Hoveden," vol. i. pp. xxxv. et seq.

[2] The meagre and irregular entries from 758, which Earle styles (Intr. xii.) "mere chronography, an ineffectual attempt to fill out the tale of years with corresponding events," may have been thrown together just after Ecgberht's accession, as there is a break in the genealogical preface that precedes them which suggests that it originally closed with Ecgberht's predecessor, Beorhtric.

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

probably the first to begin the series of developements which transformed this Bishop's Roll into a national history; and the clerk to whom he entrusted its compilation continued the Roll by a series of military and political entries to which we owe our knowledge of the reign of Æthelwulf, while he enlarged and revised the work throughout, prefixing to its opening those broken traditions of the coming of our fathers[1] which, touched as they are here and there by mythical intermixture, remain the one priceless record of the conquest of Britain.[2]

Its growth under Ælfred.

It was this Latin chronicle of Swithun's clerk that Ælfred seems to have taken in hand about 887, and whose whole character he changed by giving it an English form.[3] In its earlier portions he carried still further the process of expansion. An introduction dating from the birth of Christ, drawn from the work of Bæda, was added to its opening, and entries from the same source were worked into

[1] For the worth of these traditions, see Earle (Intr. ix. x.), and my "Making of England," p. 28, note.

[2] Though hardly attributable to Swithun's own pen, Mr. Earle (Intr. xiv.) has little doubt of the composition of this Chronicle "during his episcopate and at his see." The date of its compilation is shown by the "genealogical demonstration" (p. xii.) with which it closes at the death of Æthelwulf. So far as we can see the work was still in Latin.

[3] Pauli dates Ælfred's chronicle-work as "soon after 890" ("Life of Ælfred," 180, 191). Earle however shows the probability of 887 for the king's first compilation, as not only is there a distinct change in the character of the entries at this point, but Asser must have had in his hands a chronicle which ended in 887, the information he draws from that quarter ending in that year. (Earle, Intr. xv.)

the after-annals.[1] But it was where Swithun's work ended that Ælfred's own work really began, for it is from the death of Æthelwulf that the Roll widens into a continuous narrative, a narrative full of life and originality, whose vigour and freshness mark the gift of a new power to the English tongue. The appearance of such a work in their own mother speech could not fail to produce a deep impression on the people whose story it told. With it English history became the heritage of the English people. Bæda had left it accessible merely to noble or priest; Ælfred was the first to give it to the people at large. Nor was this all. The tiny streams of historic record which had been dispersed over the country at large were from this time drawn into a single channel. The Chronicle, for from this time we may use the term by which the work has become famous, served even more than the presence of the Dane to put an end to the existence of distinct annals in Northumbria and Mercia,[2] and to help on the progress of national unity by reflecting everywhere the same national consciousness.

[1] As far, that is, as Bæda goes, to 731. From 449 to 731, the entries for thirty-one years are wholly, and those for twelve more partially, drawn from Bæda.

[2] Stubbs (Pref. to Hoveden, i. xi.) points out that its publication had possibly "the same effect on the previously existing materials and schemes of history that the publication of Higden's Polychronicon had in the fourteenth, and the invention of printing in the fifteenth centuries. It stopped the writing of new books, and insured the destruction of the old." To this cause he attributes the want of any distinctly Northumbrian history of the ninth century, in spite of the existence of scholars at York till after the invasion and settlement of the Danes.

CHAP. IV.

Ælfred. 878-901.

Renewal of war.

When his work on Bæda was finished Ælfred, it is thought, began his translation of the Consolation of Boethius; and it is not improbable[1] that the metrical translation of the Metra of Boethius was also from his hand. From philosophy and this effort at poetry he turned to give to his people a book on practical theology. As far as we know the translation of the Pastoral Rule of Pope Gregory was his last work; and of all his translations it was the most carefully done. It is only as we follow the king in the manifold activity of his life that we understand his almost passionate desire for that "stillness" which was essential to his work. But it was only by short spaces that the land was "still," and once more Ælfred's work of peace was to be broken off by a renewal of the old struggle. Five years indeed had passed since the last attack; but with the death of Guthrum-Æthelstan in 890[2] the king lost his hold on East Anglia; and though the frith between the two nations was not only renewed, but secured by the giving of hostages, Ælfred must have seen that it needed but a little aid from without to rouse the men of the Danelaw to a renewal of their attack on Wessex. And at this juncture the aid from without suddenly offered itself; for the fortunes of England were swayed by a revolution which was going on in the north.

Harald Fair-hair.

Through the years that followed the Peace of Wedmore the movement towards unity which the northmen had furthered by their descents on the English

[1] "Geschichte der Englischen Litteratur," p. 101. Rd. ten Brink. (A. S. G.)

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 890.

peoples took a new vigour in their own homeland; the old isolation of fiord from fiord, and dale from dale, began to break down; and the little commonwealths which had held so jealously aloof from each other were drawn together whether they would or no. Great kingdoms thus grew up in each of the three regions of Scandinavia. Norway was the first to become a single monarchy. Legend told how one of its many rulers, Harald of Westfold, sent his men to bring him Gytha of Hordaland, a girl whom he had chosen for his wife; and how Gytha sent his men back again with taunts at the lord of so petty a realm. The taunts went home, and Harald swore "Never will I clip or comb my hair till I have mastered all Norway with scatt and dues and king's domains, or died in the trying."[1] So every springtide came war and hosting, harrying and burning, till in 883 a great fight at Hafursfiord settled the matter,[2] and Harald "Ugly Head," as men called him while the strife lasted, was free to shear his locks again, and became Harald Harfager, or "Fair-hair."[3]

Invasion of Hasting.

The revolution gave fresh life to the pirate raids abroad, for the northmen loved no master, and a great multitude fled out of the country, some pushing as far as Iceland and colonizing it; some

[1] Harald Fair-hair's Saga, c. v. Laing's "Sea Kings," i. 274.

[2] *Ibid.* 287. A poem on the battle speaks of English and Scottish warriors and some from the Frankish coast as engaged in it. These were of course simply Wikings who had gathered from these quarters for the strife. The battle was partly decided by "the fierce stone-storm's pelting rain," which formed a marked feature in all northern fighting.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 292.

OF NEW YORK.

CHAP. IV. Alfred. 878-901.

sailing southward and waging war against their new lord from the Orkneys and Shetlands.[1] From these haunts, however, Harald drove them at last, sweeping the coast as far as Man summer after summer,[2] and setting up an earldom in the Orkneys, which furnished a new base of operations against the kingdom of the Scots, while the sea-kings steered southward to join Guthrum's host in the Rhine-country, or Hasting in the Channel.[3] The impulse which the new-comers gave was sorely needed by the Wikings, for the bolder temper of Western Christendom was giving fresh vigour to the struggle against them. At the close of 891 the pirates were beaten by King Arnulf on the Dyle in a fight so decisive that they never after attempted to settle on German soil; and even Hasting, master as he still was of northern Frankland, saw his host worn out by the resolute attacks of King Odo. It was time to seek new fields, and famine quickened the sea-kings' resolve. In 893 a fleet of two hundred and fifty vessels gathered at Boulogne, and steering for the port of Lymne the pirates established themselves in the neighbouring Andredsweald;[4] while shortly after Hasting himself with eighty ships entered the

[1] Harald Fair-hair's Saga, c. v. Laing's "Sea Kings," i. p. 288.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 291.

[3] If we follow the Saga, with Skene ("Celtic Scotland," i. 336, note, and 344, note), Hafursfiord may be dated in 883, and the Wikings' expulsion from the Orkneys, with the foundation of the earldom, had taken place before 893.

[4] Eng. Chron. a. 893. The "Mickle wood, that we call Andred, was from east to west a hundred and twelve miles long or longer, and thirty miles broad."

Rising of the Danelaw.

Thames, and pushing up the Swale into northern Kent, formed his winter-camp at Milton.

In the spring of 894 they pushed their raids into Hampshire and Berkshire; but the success of their enterprise hung on the co-operation of the Danelaw. The compact with Ælfred however was still fresh, and the English Danes remained quiet,[1] while the king, who had detached his son Eadward with a small force to watch the pirate-host through the winter, and stationed ealdorman Æthelred within the walls of London to hold the line of the Thames, himself by skilful encampments held the two bodies of his assailants for a year at bay, and prisoned them within the bounds of the Weald. For a while the king had hopes of ending the war by a new treaty such as that of Wedmore. Hasting swore to refrain from further ravages, and confirmed his oath by giving hostages, and suffering his two boys to be baptized;[2] but the negotiations were a mere blind, and the good faith of the English Danes yielded at last to the call of their kinsmen. The forces in the Andredsweald threw themselves by a rapid march across the Thames; and Ælfred had hardly gathered men to strengthen the army which beset them in their camp on the Colne when the secret of this movement was revealed by a rising of the whole Danelaw in their aid.

[1] After the landing of Hasting "Northumbrians and East-Engle had given oaths to Ælfred, and the East-Engle six hostages" (Eng. Chron. a. 894). This however did not hinder them from joining the Danes, though not as yet in any general fashion.

[2] Æthelweard, a. 894, lib. iv. c. 3.

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

The fight with the Danes.

The rising, however, only brought out the new strength of Ælfred's realm. Its policy of defence was set aside for a policy of rapid and energetic attack. The king's son Eadward, who may have ruled in the Eastern Kingdom of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, with the Mercian ealdorman Æthelred, added to their force the men of London, fell suddenly on the pirates' camp in Essex at a moment when it was stripped of defenders, and sank the ships moored within its entrenchment. The danger however was as great in the west as in the east, for the Danes again found allies in the Welsh. They were no doubt summoned to that quarter by the house of Roderic, which was now greatly harassed by the petty princes of the border who owned Ælfred's supremacy. While a fleet from East Anglia therefore coasted round to West Wales and moored off Exeter, the host from the Colne, which had formed a new camp at Shoebury, suddenly struck past London along the line of the Thames, and crossing the Cotswolds into the Severn valley ravaged the lands of Ælfred's allies. Ælfred however in person held Exeter against attack from the West-Welsh and Cornwealas, while Eadward and Æthelred nerved themselves for a final blow in the west. Gathering forces "from every township east of Parret, and both east and west of the Selwood, and also north of Thames, and west of the Severn," from almost all Ælfred's England in fact, save the western parts which were supplying the king's own camp on the Exe, and aided by "some part of the North-Welsh people," they caught the pirate host in the Severn valley at Buttington, forced

it after a siege of some weeks to fight, defeated it with a great slaughter, and again drove it to its old quarters in Essex.

Defeat of the Danes.

Fresh supplies of fighting men, however, from the Danelaw enabled Hasting to repeat his dash upon the west, and marching day and night across Mid-Britain, to find a stronghold within the walls of Chester. The strength of the house of Roderic lay in this quarter of Wales, and the occupation of Chester must have aimed at securing their co-operation. Deserted as the city was, its Roman walls were too strong to force, but by a close investment of the place through the winter Æthelred at last drove the northmen from their hold, though he was unable to follow them as they hurried through North Wales, and by a wide circuit through Northumbria again withdrew to a camp on the Lea.[1] Here they were joined by their brethren from the Channel, who, foiled before Exeter, fell back ravaging along the coast to the Thames. A rout of the Londoners, who attacked them in 895, proved the strength of their camp on the Lea some twenty miles from the great city, and through harvest-tide the king who had now come up from the west contented himself with watching it "while the people reaped their crops." But meanwhile he was preparing for a decisive stroke. The whole of the Danish ships had entered the Lea in 896, and lay under shelter of the camp, when the pirates suddenly found the river-course blocked by two strong fortresses. The retreat of their boats to the Thames and sea was thus

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 895. This seems the meaning of a corrupt passage in Æthelweard.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

wholly cut off,[1] and the forced abandonment of their fleet, as the pirates struck again from their camp to the Severn, practically ended the war. After a month in their camp at Bridgenorth the Danish host broke up in 897. East Anglian and West Anglian returned to their home in the Danelaw, while the followers of Hasting retreated to their former quarters across the Channel.[2]

Ælfred's life.

"No wise man should desire a soft life," Ælfred had written some years before this last struggle with the Danes, "if he careth for any worship here from the world, or for eternal life after this life is over."[3] His own life had certainly been no soft one. Though he had hardly reached fifty years of age, incessant labour and care had told on the vigour of his youth, and he must have already felt the first touches of the weakness that was to bring him to the grave. But he was still a mighty hunter, waking the stillness of the "Itene Wood," along the Southampton Water, or the stiller reaches of the Cornish moorlands, with hound and horn;[4] and his life was marked by the same vivid activity as of old. To the scholars he gathered round him he was the very type of a scholar, snatching every hour he could find to read or listen to books read to him.[5] The singers of his

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 896. [2] Eng. Chron. a. 897.

[3] Transl. of Boethius, in Sharon Turner, "Hist. Ang. Sax." ii. 48.

[4] "In omni venatoria arte industrius venator incessabiliter laborat non in vanum, nam incomparabilis omnibus peritia et felicitate in illa arte sicut et in cæteris omnibus Dei donis fuit, sicut et nos sæpissime vidimus."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 16.

[5] "Hæc est propria et usitatissima illius consuetudo die

court found in him a brother singer, gathering the old songs of his people to teach them to his children,[1] breaking his renderings from the Latin with simple verse, or solacing himself in hours of depression with the music of the Psalms. He carried in his bosom a little handbook in which he noted things as they struck him, now a bit of family genealogy, now a prayer, now such a story as that of Ealdhelm playing minstrel on the bridge.[2] He passed from court and study to plan buildings and instruct craftsmen and gold-workers, or to teach even falconers and dog-keepers their business.[3] At one time we find him planning a lantern with sides of horn, whose sheltered candles may serve as a rough means of measuring the hours, at another delighting in the fair form and early promise of his grandson Æthelstan, and arraying him, child as he is, with the purple cloak, and jewelled belt, and gold-hilted sword of a royal cnecht,[4] at another time urging Bishop Werfrith to turn into English the "Dialogues" of Gregory, at another hearing a law-case as he stood washing his hands in a chamber at Wardour.[5]

noctuque, inter omnia alia mentis et corporis impedimenta, aut per se ipsum libros recitare aut aliis recitantibus audire."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 50.

[1] In his boyhood "Saxonica poemata die noctuque solers auditor relatu aliorum sæpissime audiens docibilis memoriter retinebat."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 16. For his later life see *ib.* p. 43.

[2] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 55.

[3] "Edificia nova machinatione facere."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 43. "Aurifices et artifices suos omnes, et falconarios et accipitrarios canicularios quoque docere."—*Ib.* 43.

[4] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 210.

[5] Kemble, Cod. Dipl. 328: "And the king stood, washed his

CHAP. IV.
Ælfred.
878-901.

His love of strangers.

His love of strangers, his questionings of travellers and scholars, betray an imaginative restlessness that longed to break out of the narrow world within which his own experience bound him.[1] None were more welcome at his court than men from other lands; the frankness and openness of spirit which breathes in the pleasant chat of his books showed itself above all in his converse with them, and a special part of his revenue was set aside for their entertainment.[2] It is in Ælfred's court that England for the first time begins to emerge from her insular isolation, and to recognize herself as a European state. Not only Welshmen and Irishmen, but "many Franks" as well as Bretons, with men alike from Southern Gaul and Friesland, the country about the mouths of the Rhine with which England was soon to come into closer contact, offered aid of book or sword to the king. Even Danes were among the comers,[3] for the fight was hardly over when the fusion of races began, and we find a young noble of "pagan" stock playing scholar among the monks at Athelney.[4]

hands at Wardour in the bower; when he had done this, he asked Æthelm why our judgment seemed not right," &c.

[1] "Ignotarum rerum investigationi solerter se jungebat."—Asser (ed. Wise), 44.

[2] "Eleemosynarum quoque studio et largitati indigenis et advenis omnium gentium, ac maximâ et incomparabili contra omnes homines affabilitate et jocunditate."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 44.

[3] "Franci autem multi, Frisones, Galli, Pagani, Britones et Scoti, Armorici, sponte se suo dominio subdiderunt, nobiles scilicet et ignobiles, quos omnes sicut suam propriam gentem, secundum suam dignitatem regebat, diligebat, honorabat, pecuniâ et potestate ditabat."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 44.

[4] "In quo monasterio unum Paganicæ gentis edoctum in

Athelney.

Athelney indeed was the largest of Ælfred's experiments in the way of getting foreign aid for his religious and intellectual undertakings. In founding this abbey, as a thankoffering for the deliverance which had begun in the marshes, he found his main obstacle in the refusal of every West Saxon, of free or noble birth, to become a monk. There were monasteries indeed still remaining in the country, like Malmesbury or Glastonbury, but whether from the shock of the Danish inroads, or from the tendency of popular feeling, or from the circumstances of their original foundation, they either were or had become groups of unmarried clerks, bound together by the common endowment of the house, but refusing obedience to any definite rule.[1] "Regulars," as those who lived by rule were called, seem to have been looked on with scorn in Wessex, and Ælfred found no West Saxon willing to become in this sense a monk. He could only meet the difficulty by a settlement of

monachico habitu degentem, juvenem admodum, vidimus, non ultimum scilicet eorum."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 61.

[1] The passage in Asser (ed. Wise), p. 61, is most important in its bearing on our later monastic history. "Quia nullum de suâ propriâ gente nobilem ac liberum hominem, nisi infantes. . . . . qui monasticam voluntarie vellet subire vitam habebat, nimirum quia per multa retroacta annorum curricula monasticæ vitæ desiderium ab illa tota gente, nec non et a multis aliis gentibus funditus desierat, quamvis perplurima adhuc monasteria in illa regione constructa permaneant, nullo tamen regulam illius vitæ ordinabiliter tenente (nescio quare) aut pro alienigenarum infestationibus quæ sæpissime terra marique hostiliter irrumpunt, aut etiam pro nimia illius gentis in omni genere divitiarum abundantia (propter quam multo magis id genus despectæ monasticæ vitæ fieri existimo), ideo diversi generis monachos in eodem monasterio congregare studuit."

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

strangers. John, the Old Saxon, who was among the foreign scholars at his court, was sent into Somerset as abbot, a few priests and deacons were hired from abroad to join him, and, by an expedient that marks the time, slaves were bought in Gaul to serve as lay brethren, and children from the same quarter to fill up, as they grew to manhood under the abbot's teaching, the thin ranks of his monks.[1] The experiment however proved an unsuccessful one. John was driven back to court by an attempt of some monks to assassinate him, and we hear nothing of Athelney as a school in later days.

Othere and Wulfstan.

In spite however of this luckless experiment strangers were as welcome as ever at Ælfred's court, and we can still see in the king's own words with how keen an attention he listened to the tales of far-off lands that they brought him. Othere must have been one of the Wikings that the king had gathered about him for aid in fight against their brother plunderers; it was to "his lord King Ælfred" that he told how long and narrow a land was the northman's land. "All that man can pasture or plough lies by the sea," hard pressed by the "wild moors," the broad fells, where Fin and Cwen carried on their warfare with the men of the fiords. Here Othere dwelt "northernmost of all the northmen," in

[1] "Johannem presbyterum monachum, scilicit Eald Saxonum genere, Abbatem constituit, deinde ultramarinos presbyteros quosdam et diaconos; ex quibus cum nec adhuc tantum numerum quantum vellet haberet, comparavit etiam quamplurimos ejusdem gentis Gallicæ, ex quibus quosdam infantes in eodem monasterio edoceri imperavit et subsequente tempore ad monachicum habitum sublevari."—Asser (ed. Wise), p. 62.

waste Halgoland, no one to the north of him save a few scattered Fin-folk. He was "one of the first men in that country, though he had not more than twenty horned cattle and twenty sheep and twenty swine, and the little that he ploughed, he ploughed with horses;" but he was wealthy in the wealth of the north, in his six hundred reindeer, in his whale fishery, and in his share of the tribute the Fins paid the men of his country, the skins of martens, reindeer and bear, cloaks of bear or other skin, and eiderdown and whalebone, and ship-ropes of whales' skin or seals'-skin. Othere's cruise had been along the western coast northward from Halgoland; and in his longing "to try how far that country lay to the north, and whether any lived north of the waste," he had done a feat of seamanship which found no rival till the days of the Tudors, by rounding the North Cape and penetrating into the bay of Archangel, the then country of "the Beormas." "Thither he went chiefly, besides his craving to see the country, on account of the walruses, because they have very noble bone in their teeth, some of which they brought to the king." Wulfstan's was a less daring cruise, though it told Ælfred of the Baltic and its huge rivers and the strange customs among the tribes of the "Eastland," where "there are many burhs, and in each is a king, and there is much honey and fish, and the king and the richest men drink mares' milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead."[1] But both helped Ælfred to realize the lands from which his assailants came, lands where, as he notes, "the Engle dwelt

[1] See Ælfred's insertion in his "Orosius."

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

before they came hither to this country," and the far-reaching energy of the men who had pushed to Nova Zembla and the Neva before swooping upon Britain.

Ælfred's court.

With all this restless activity Ælfred was a thorough man of business, careful of detail, industrious, methodical. Each hour of the day had its appointed task; there was the same order in the division of his revenue and in the arrangement of his court. The more definite organization which the court, the personal following of the monarch, was taking, marked the steady developement of the monarchy. It is now that we see coming into view the great officers who were to play so prominent a part in after politics, the Horse-Thegn, or Constable;[1] the Cup-Thegn,[2] or Butler, whose rank may be seen from the fact that the office[3] was held by the father of Osburga, Æthelwulf's first wife and the mother of Ælfred; and the Horder, or Treasurer.[4] The last of these was fast rising into importance as the growth of the royal revenue enabled Ælfred to enlarge more and more the sphere of his expenditure. His budget is the first royal budget we possess; and though the fact that the national expenses were still in the main defrayed by local means renders any comparison of it with a modern budget impossible, it is still of interest as indicating the wide range of public activity which even now was open to an English king.[5]

[1] Ecgwulf was King's Horse-Thegn in 897. Eng. Chron. a. 897.

[2] Sigewulf Pincerna in 892. Cod. Dip. 320.

[3] Asser (ed. Wise), pp. 4, 5.

[4] "Ælfric thesaurarius" in 892. Cod. Dip. 320.

[5] Asser (ed. Wise), pp. 65-67.

Ælfred's budget.

A sixth of the royal income was devoted to what would be called the military and civil services. Though the main cost of war had not as yet fallen on the state, since the fighting man was bound to serve without pay and provide his own arms and supplies,[1] while works of fortification were a burden on burh and township,[2] the new course of warfare with the Danes had already thrown some expenses on the royal hoard, for it can only have been from his own resources that Ælfred drew the means of building the "long ships" which formed the nucleus of his fleet, or of maintaining their Frisian crews. Civil administration was still more a matter of local expenditure; while justice was one of the most lucrative sources of the royal revenue; but the hoard had to defray the cost of the household itself, the privy purse of the king, and the pay of his officers and thegns. Another sixth of the royal funds was devoted to public works, with such expenses as those involved in the restoration of London and its walls, or in the bringing of workmen and artificers from foreign lands; while as large a sum was devoted to what we may roughly term the diplomatic services and foreign affairs, though under this head we must include the reception and entertainment of the strangers who thronged the court, as well as the expenses incurred by the king's envoys and negotiators. The public services, public works, and diplomacy thus formed the main branches of Ælfred's expenditure. An eighth of his revenue however was devoted to the relief of the poor, and another eighth to education,

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 220, note 3. [2] *Ibid.* i. 108.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

to his literary enterprizes, the books which he distributed to various churches, and mainly, no doubt, to the maintenance of the palace school. The remainder formed the ecclesiastical side of his budget, half of it going to the two monasteries founded by the king at Shaftesbury and Athelney, half to religious houses in other parts of the realm, such as that which he was raising at Winchester, as well as in gifts to abbeys among the Welsh, in Ireland, and even in Brittany and Gaul. Gifts such as these had no doubt a political as well as a religious end, for in all these quarters it was needful for Ælfred to find friends in the strife that he looked for with the Dane.

Ælfred's foreign policy.

That resistance to the pirates was a matter not only of English but of European concern, was as clear to Ælfred as to Æthelwulf, and at the end of his life we find him striving to take up again the threads of his father's policy, and opening a system of alliances which was to be carried out by his successors. The Counts who were now rising up in Flanders were, through their hold upon the Scheldt from which the Danish squadrons had so often issued, among the most important of Ælfred's neighbours; and with the marriage of his younger daughter Ælfthryth to Baldwin the Second,[1] began that close political and industrial connexion between England and the Low Countries, which has through so long a course of centuries influenced the fortunes of both. The connexion was no doubt due to Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald, who, after her two former marriages with Æthelwulf and Æthelbald,

[1] W. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (ed. Hardy), vol. i. 193.

re-crossed the Channel to become the wife of Baldwin Iron-arm, the first Count of Flanders, and the mother by him of this Baldwin the Second, while as Ælfred's step-mother and sister-in-law, she probably maintained relations with the English court which at last brought about the marriage of Ælfthryth. It is only in this marriage however, and the ceaseless intercourse with the Papal court, to which he seems to have sent money and gifts every year, that we can find indications of Ælfred's foreign policy.

Ælfred and Britain.

His main work had in fact to be done nearer home. To the westward he had to deal with the North Welsh, whom he had severed from the Danes by the interposition of English Mercia, but whose hostility remained a danger hardly less than that from the heathen. From the first, however, his policy in this quarter was served by divisions amongst the Welsh themselves. During the early years of his reign the house of Roderic the Great, which remained the dominant power among them, still maintained its friendship with the northmen; but the petty chieftains, whose freedom it threatened, preferred the distant supremacy of Wessex to the nearer rule of the house of Roderic, and in 885 the kings of Demetia and Brecknock, with the princes of Gwent owned Ælfred as their lord, in exchange for his pledge of defence against their enemy.[1] Ten years later the war with Hasting widened into a war with the northern Welshmen, and in 897 the submission of the house of Roderic at the close of the strife left all North-Wales subject to the king.

[1] Asser (ed. Wise), p. 49.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

Though we know less of his diplomacy in the states to the northward of the Danelaw, we can see that Ælfred was busy both with Bernicia and the kingdom of the Scots. The establishment of the Danelaw in Mid-Britain, the presence of the pirates in Caithness and the Hebrides, made these states his natural allies; for pressed as they were by the Wikings alike from the north and from the south, their only hope of independent existence lay in the help of Wessex. Of the first state we know little. The wreck of Northumbria had given freedom to the Britons of Strath-Clyde, to whom the name of Cumbrians is from this time transferred. The same wreck restored to its old isolation the kingdom of Bernicia. Deira formed part of the Danelaw, but the settlement of the Danes did not reach beyond the Tyne, for Bernicia, ravaged and plundered as it had been, still remained English, and governed as it would seem by the stock of its earlier kings. The weakness of this state drew it to Ælfred's side; and we know that the Bernician ruler, Eadwulf of Bamborough, was Ælfred's friend.[1]

The kingdom of the Scots.

The same dread of the Danes drew to him the kingdom of the Scots. The Scot-kingdom, which at its outset lurked almost unseen among the lakes of Argyle, now embraced the whole of North-Britain from Caithness to the Firths, for the very name of the Picts had disappeared at a moment when the power of the Picts seemed to have reached its height. The Pictish kingdom had risen fast to greatness after

[1] Sim. Durh. "Hist. S. Cuthberti" (Twysden, p. 73). Ealdred, Eadwulf's son, "erat dilectus regi Edwardo, sicut et pater suus Eadulfus dilectus fuit regi Elfredo."

the victory of Nectansmere in 685. In the century which followed Ecgfrith's defeat, its kings reduced the Scots of Dalriada from nominal dependence to actual subjection, the annexation of Angus and Fife carried their eastern border to the sea, while to the south their alliance with the Northumbrians in the warfare which both waged on the Welsh extended their bounds on the side of Cumbria or Strath-Clyde. But the hour of Pictish greatness was marked by the extinction of the Pictish name. In the midst of the ninth century the direct line of their royal house came to an end, and the under-king of the Scots of Dalriada, Kenneth Mac Alpin, ascended the Pictish throne in right of his maternal descent.[1] For fifty years more Kenneth and his successors remained kings of the Picts. At the moment we have reached however, the title passed suddenly away, the tribe which had given its chief to the throne gave its name to the realm, and "Pict-land" disappeared from history to make room first for Alban or Albania, and then for "the land of the Scots."[2] With these internal revolutions its English neighbours had little concern. But a common suffering drew the new monarchy in the north to the new monarchy which was rising in the south, for the storm of invasion had broken more roughly over Alban than over England itself.

[1] The most complete account of Pictish history during this obscure period is given by Skene in his "Celtic Scotland," i. cap. vi. Kenneth's accession was in 844.

[2] Skene, "Celtic Scotl." i. 335. The first instance of the use of "Scotti" for any inhabitants of "Pict-land" proper seems to be in 877. Skene, "Celtic Scotl." i. 328. "Pictavia" becomes "Albania" from 889. *Ibid.* i. 335.

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

Shattered by a strife in which its northern and western districts had become almost independent, and menaced with the danger of actual extinction, it was natural that the kingdom of the Scots should look for friendship if not for actual succour to the West Saxons and their king.

Ælfred death.

The strife however for which this diplomacy was preparing the way, was to be wrought by hands other than the king's. Hardly four years in fact had passed since the triumph over Hasting when the "stillness" he had sighed for came to him. Ælfred died on the 28th of October, 901. "So long as I have lived," he wrote, as life was closing about him, "I have striven to live worthily." It is this height and singleness of purpose, this concentration of every faculty on the noblest aim, that lifts Ælfred out of the narrow bounds of Wessex, for if the sphere of his action seems too small to justify a comparison of him with the few whom the world owns as its greatest men, he rises to their level in the moral grandeur of his life. And it is this that still hallows his memory among Englishmen. He stands indeed in the forefront of his race, for he is the noblest as he is the most complete embodiment of all that is great, all that is loveable in the English temper, of its practical energy, its patient and enduring force, of the reserve and self-control that give steadiness and sobriety to a wide outlook and a restless daring, of its temperance and fairness, its frankness and openness, its sensitiveness to affection, its poetic tenderness, its deep and reverent religion. Religion indeed was the groundwork of Ælfred's character. His temper

was instinct with piety. Everywhere throughout his writings that remain to us the name of God, the thought of God, stir him to outbursts of ecstatic adoration. But of the narrowness, the want of proportion, the predominance of one quality over another which commonly goes with an intensity of religious feeling or of moral purpose he showed not a trace. He felt none of that scorn of the world about him which drove the nobler souls of his day to monastery or hermitage. Vexed as he was by sickness and constant pain, not only did his temper take no touch of asceticism, but a rare geniality, a peculiar elasticity and mobility of nature, gave colour and charm to his life. He had the restless outlook of the artistic nature, its tenderness and susceptibility, its quick apprehension of unseen danger, its craving for affection, its sensitiveness to wrong. It was with himself rather than with his reader that he communed, as thought of the foe without or of ingratitude and opposition within broke the calm pages of Gregory or Boethius; but the loneliness that breathes in such words never begot in him a contempt for men or the judgement of men. Nor could danger or disappointment check for an hour his vivid activity. From one end of his reign to the other every power was bent to the work of rule. His practical energy found scope for itself in a material and administrative restoration of the wasted land; his intellectual energy breathed fresh life into education and literature; while his capacity for inspiring trust and affection drew the hearts of Englishmen to a common centre, and began the upbuilding of a new England. Little by little men

CHAP. IV. Ælfred. 878-901.

came to recognize in Ælfred a ruler of higher and nobler stamp than the world had seen. Never had it seen a king who lived only for the good of his people. Never had it seen a ruler who set aside every personal aim to devote himself solely to the welfare of those whom he ruled. It was this grand self-mastery that won him love and reverence in his own day, and it is this that has hallowed his memory ever since. "I desire," said the King, "to leave to the men that come after me a remembrance of me in good works." His aim has been more than fulfilled. His memory has come down to us with a living distinctness through the mists of exaggeration and legend which time gathered round it. The instinct of the people has clung to him with a singular affection. The love which he won a thousand years ago has lingered round his name from that day to this. While every other name of those earlier times has all but faded from the recollection of Englishmen, that of Ælfred remains familiar to every English child.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF ÆLFRED.

901—937.

Eadward the Elder.

WITH the death of Ælfred the work for which he had so long prepared passed into the hands of his son.[1] Eadward seems only partially to have shared

[1] For Eadward's reign the great authority is the English Chronicle. The portion of this work due to Ælfred's pen, or written under his supervision, probably ends in 891 [Earle, "Parallel Chron." Intr. xv.-xvii.], but from 891 to Eadward's death in 924 the annals are carried on by a writer of singular force. Of the years from 894 to 897 Earle says, "This is the most remarkable piece of writing in the whole series of Chronicles. It is a warm, vigorous, earnest narrative, free from the rigidity of the other annals, full of life and originality. Compared with that passage every other piece of prose, not in these Chronicles merely, but throughout the whole range of extant Saxon literature must assume a secondary rank." ["Parallel Chron." Intr. xvi.] But the years that follow, though told with less warmth and fulness, are told in the same spirit. From 901 to 910 indeed the narrative is scanty; but from 910 to 924 "we have a steady, regular, well-written narrative, homogeneous and unmixed in matter, like the head-piece of this section, and unlike all the rest of the Chronicle. It is all sieges and battles, and fortifications, and garrisons, and surrenders, and armed pacifications. It is a model of uniformity, both in matter and manner." [Earle, "Parallel Chron." Intr. xviii.]

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901.
937.

his father's taste for letters; while his younger brother, Æthelweard, mastered both Latin and English in the palace-school,[1] Eadward's studies, like those of most of the young nobles, were restricted to books and songs in his own tongue.[2] But he was already famous as a warrior who had rivalled the glory of Æthelred in the storm of the pirate camp on the Colne as well as in the victory of Buttington; and with his father's warlike ardour he inherited his political capacity. Like Ælfred he was able to set aside for years the dreams of mere warlike enterprize; and his earlier reign, though troubled for a while by the revolt of a claimant of his throne, was in the main a time of peace. The failure of their last attack had left the English Danes little minded to quarrel with Wessex, while the strength of their Wiking allies was thrown for some years into the strife on the other side of the Channel, where Hrolf was establishing himself in the valley of the Seine. The peace indeed was far from being unbroken. Ælfred's death had revived the question of the succession; the order established under Æthelwulf by which his sons followed one another to the exclusion of their children was now exhausted; and it can only have been by a decision of the Witenagemot that the children of Æthelwulf's elder sons were set aside, and the royal stock settled in the descendants of

[1] "In quâ scholâ utriusque linguæ libri, Latinæ scilicet et Saxonicæ, assidue legebantur." Asser (ed. Wise), p. 43.

[2] He and his sister Ælfthryth, who married Count Baldwin, "et psalmos et Saxonicos libros et maxime Saxonica carmina studiose didicere." *Ib.*

Ælfred, the youngest. That this decision expressed the national will was shown at Eadward's accession. When his cousin Æthelwald, king Æthelred's son, rose to claim the crown, he found himself without support and forced to fly from Wessex.[1] The shelter which he found among the Danes of Northumbria and his acceptance as their king, marks the first step in that union of Danes and Englishmen which was to be the work of the coming century; and the impression of this must have been strengthened when in 905 he moored off the eastern coast and roused the Danes of East-Anglia to follow him in an attack on Wessex.[2] Eadward however anticipated the blow by appearing with an army on the Ouse; and the fall of Æthelwald in a fight with the Kentish division of this force ended the war. The Wedmore Frith was renewed at Ittingford in 906,[3] and Wessex enjoyed four years more of undisturbed tranquillity.[4]

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 901. [2] *Ibid.* a. 905.

[3] *Ibid.* a. 906.

[4] For this period the earlier English Chronicle of Winchester is largely supplemented by a Chronicle drawn up at Worcester (that known as Tiber. B. iv. of the Cotton Collection, and the "D" of Mr. Earle. "Parallel Chron." Intr. xxxix. etc.). What distinguishes this Worcester Chronicle is a large insertion of northern annals, beginning in 737; the earlier of which may be due (Stubbs, Archæol. Journ. No. 75, p. 236, note) to Bishop Werfrith of Worcester, one of Ælfred's literary assistants, who sate from 873 to 915. But for Æthelflæd's campaigns we have, inserted, a wholly independent Mercian Chronicle, ending with her death, and equal in fulness of detail to the parallel Winchester Chronicle, which restricts itself to Eadward's exploits and omits those of his sister. There are difficulties indeed in reconciling these accounts chronologically. The death of Æthelflæd is placed in the Mercian Chronicle at 918; in the

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

King of the Angul-Saxons.

That Eadward's patience however by no means implied any abandonment of Ælfred's policy, above all of his plans for a national union, was shown in a hange of the royal style. With Ælfred the connexion of his two realms had remained to the last a purely personal connexion. He had been Mercian king among the Mercians; he had remained West-Saxon king among the men of Wessex. But from the first moment of his reign Eadward showed his resolve to look on the two dominions he ruled as a single realm, and to blend their peoples in some sort into a single people. He is no longer king of the West-Saxons or of the Mercians, but "King of the Angul-Saxons."[1] The title is no doubt a transitional one; it represents the effort of the king to look on the Mercian Engle and the Saxon Gewissas as a single folk rather than any actual fusion of the one with the other; we know indeed that the separate life of Mercia under Æthelred and Æthelflæd remained

Winchester Chronicle at 922. The latter is probably the more correct, for we find Leicester, which according to the Mercian Chronicle had submitted to the Lady in 918, still Danish and leading a Danish here against her brother in 921; and as the preceding dates, at any rate from Æthelred's death, are linked in series with this final one, I have ventured to place them also four years later than the year assigned to them by the Worcester chronicler.

[1] "Angul-Saxonum rex" is his common description in the charters of his reign, a description almost confined—as we shall see—to Eadward. See Kemble, Cod. Dip. 333, 335, 1080, 1083, 1084, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096. In a charter of 901, his first year (Cod. Dip. 1078), his "Angul-Saxonum rex" explains itself by an after phrase, "Omnium judicio sapien tum Gewissorum et Mercensium."

undisturbed for all the change in the royal style. But the change was none the less a significant one. If no such people as "the Anglo-Saxons" existed or could be made to exist, the effort to create such a people had its issues in an after time, when not only West-Saxon and Mercian but every man from the Forth to the Channel should be looked on by his king and regard himself as one of an English people.[1]

Chester rebuilt.

Nor did the king's policy of inaction extend to his Mercian realm, for it must have been with his sanction or at his command that the Mercian rulers took at this moment what proved to be a first step in the final struggle with the Danelaw. In the Peace of Wedmore one of the main aims of Ælfred had been to cut off the Danelaw from the Welsh; and he had secured this by retaining all of the older Mid-England westward, as was roughly said, of the Watling Street as a new English Mercia. But in its northern portion the barrier was a weak one; for the extremity of the tract which now formed the Mercian Ealdordom—the northern part, that is, of our modern Cheshire—was little more than a strip of land across which the Dane of the Five Boroughs could easily push to call his old allies on the Welsh border to arms. To strengthen this barrier had been

[1] It may be well to note that the word "Angul-Saxon" is of purely political coinage, and that no man is ever known, save in our own day, to have called himself "an Anglo-Saxon." The phrase too applied strictly to the Engle of Mercia and the Saxons of Wessex, not to any larger area. For the general use of "Engle" and "Saxon," I must refer my readers to Mr. Freeman's exhaustive treatise, "Norm. Conq." i. App. A.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

the purpose of its rulers from the first. At its weakest point lay the ruined city of Chester, to whose military importance the recent harbourage of Hasting within its walls had probably drawn their attention. Commanding as it did the passage over the lower Dee, and the main roads from Mid-England to North-Wales, or from South-England into the wild country which had once been Cumbria, Chester furnished also a port where a fleet could be stationed to hold the mastery of the Irish Channel, and cut off the English Danelaw from the Danes of the Irish coast. Nor was it hard to restore it to its older strength. Ruined and deserted as the town had lain since its surrender to Æthelfrith in 607,[1] the military strength of its position was such as could be little harmed by time and neglect. The huge trench which severed the block of sandstone on which it stood from the rest of the higher ground, the massive walls which girt in its site, the marshy level and the river course which formed an outer barrier round them, were still ready to hand; and in their "renewal" of the town[2] in 907 Ealdorman Æthelred and his wife seem to have done little more than give protection to the passage across the Dee, by raising a mound with a stockade or fort on its summit in the low ground beside the bridge, and by extending the older walls in this quarter to the river.

[1] It was still a "waste chester" when Hasting took refuge there. Eng. Chron. a. 894. Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), i. p. 113.

[2] This is only recorded in two of the later copies of the Chronicle, Mr. Earle's B. and C. at 907. "Her wæs Ligceaster geedneowad." Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), vol. i. p. 120.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

It was probably to aid in the re-peopling of the town that a secular house of the Mercian Saint, Werburgh, was founded in the north-eastern quarter of the city: and the security of the little settlement may have been provided for by a custom which we find existing in later days, that bound every hide in the shire about it to furnish a man at its town-reeve's call to repair walls and bridge.[1]

Outbreak of the Danes.

Small as the settlement was, the end of the Mercian rulers was gained by their seizure of the town, for the shortest road between Wales and the Danelaw was now in their hands. That the check was felt by the Danes was shown by a growing restlessness which broke out at last in open warfare. A raid of the pirates over Mercia in 910[2] had to be repulsed at Tottenhale by a joint force of Mercians and West-Saxons under Eadward himself, who avenged the attack by following the beaten host across the border and harrying their land there for five weeks.[3] The blow seems to have roused the warlike spirit of the

[1] It was only by slow degrees that the new town extended itself over the ruins of the old. St. Werburgh's house stood alone in its north-eastern quarter; and only the southern half of the city, where we find on either side of Bridge Street the churches of St. Bridget and St. Michael, can represent the town of Æthelflæd, for yet more to the south the church of St. Olaf marks a later extension which can hardly be earlier than the days of Cnut.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 910. The raid is told in greater detail by Æthelweard, whose Chronicle, till now a mere version of the English Chronicle of Winchester, becomes independent from about 893 to its close in 975. His whole work, however, is all but worthless.

[3] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 910.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

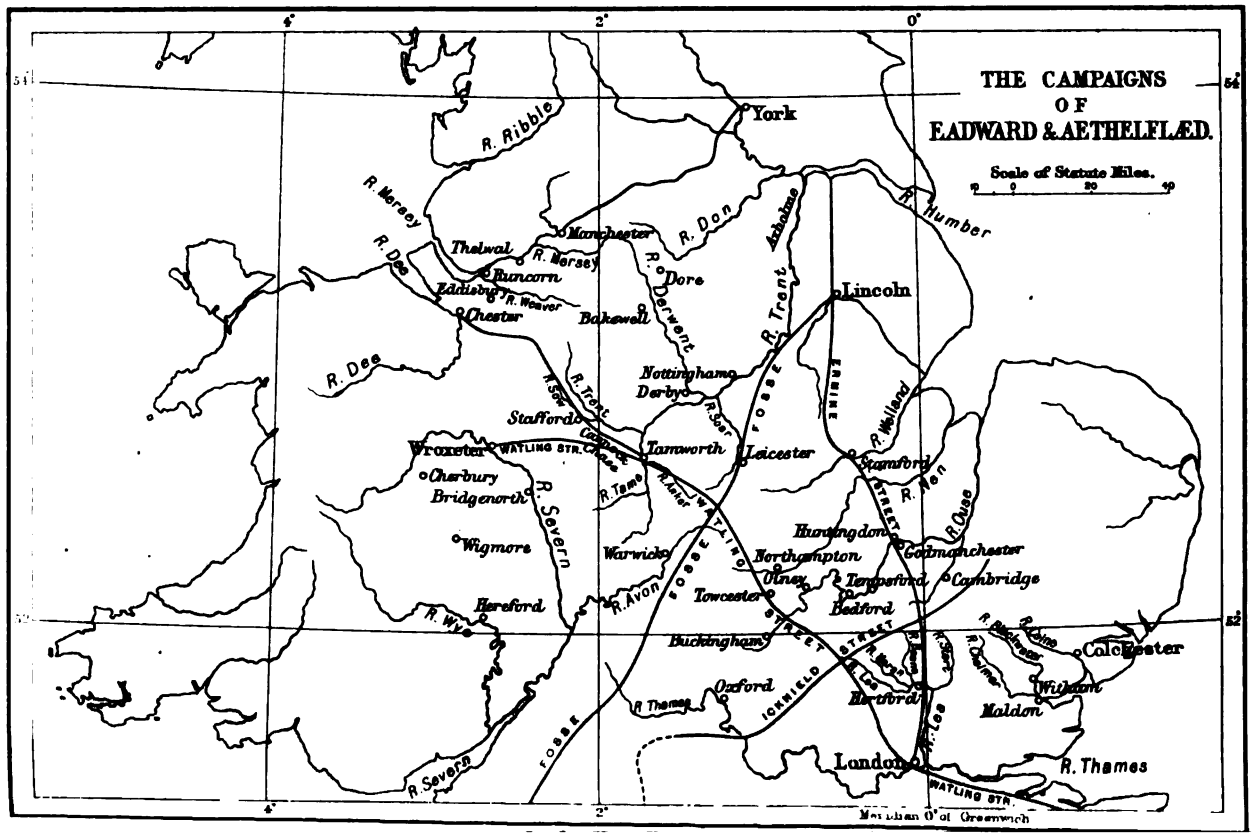
901-937.

whole Danelaw. In 911 Eadward was drawn southward by danger from the sea, where in the preceding year a pirate force had landed in the Severn and been driven back with difficulty by the fyrds of the neighbouring shires. It marks the quiet work that had been done in the years of rest which Ælfred had gained, that Eadward was able to muster a hundred ships and to ride master of the Channel. But with his stay in the south Mercia was left to its own resources; and the Northumbrians resolved to avenge the losses of their brethren across Trent. A "frith" like that of East-Anglia had bound them till now to Wessex, but this was broken, and setting aside the offers of accommodation made by Eadward and his Witenagemot,[1] the pirate host under its kings Ecwils and Halfdene poured ravaging over Mercia. But distant as Eadward himself was, his forces were already on the march, and as the Danes fell back loaded with spoil they were overtaken and attacked. The English victory was complete, and thousands of Danes fell round their two kings on the field.

Eadward and the Thames valley.

If Ealdorman Æthelred led the host to this triumph, the effort must have been his last; for he died in 912,[2] and the changes which followed on his death told on the whole character of the conflict. Within Mercia itself the change was little, for Æthelflæd, who remained its sole governor, had acted throughout as joint-ruler with Æthelred. But for Wessex it was great. The death of Æthelred enabled Eadward to take a new step in the disintegration of the shrunken

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 911.
[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 912.


THE CAMPAIGNS
OF
EADWARD & AETHELFLÆD.
Scale of Statute Miles.
10 0 20 40
York
R. Ribble
R. Mersey
R. Dee
Thelwal
Runcorn
Eddisbury
R. Weaver
Chester
Manchester
R. Mersey
R. Don
R. Derwent
Dore
Bakewell
Lincoln
R. Humber
R. Trent
Nottingham
Derby
R. Soar
Stafford
R. Trent
Tamworth
Leicester
Wroxeter
WATLING STR.
Cherbury
Bridgenorth
R. Severn
R. Tame
R. Anker
Wigmore
Warwick
R. Avon
Hereford
R. Wye
R. Severn
FOSSE
WATLING STREET
Towcester
Buckingham
Oxford
R. Thames
ICKNIELD STREET
Hertford
R. Lea
London
WATLING STR.
R. Thames
Stamford
R. Welland
R. Nen
R. Ouse
Huntingdon
Northampton
Olney
Tempsford
Bedford
Godmanchester
Cambridge
Colchester
Witham
Maldon
R. Chelmer
R. Blackwater
R. Stort
R. Lea
Meridian 0° of Greenwich

Mercian realm, and he now took from Mercia London and Oxford "and the lands that belonged to them,"[1] in other words, the lower valley of the Thames. The annexation was important, not only as pointing forward to Eadward's plans of a yet wider re-union, but as doing away with the barrier which Ælfred had set between Wessex and the Danelaw by the interposition of the Mercian Ealdormanry. In bringing his border into contact with that of the Danelaw, Eadward announced that the time of rest was over, and that a time of action had begun. His course, however, was marked by extreme caution. It was easy to secure the line of the Thames by renewing, as Ælfred had done, the older walls of London, a work of reparation which has left its mark everywhere among the Roman brickwork and masonry; while the deep morasses along the valley of the Lea still offered a fair check to any attack from the Danes in Essex. But at the point where the boundary of the Danelaw struck to the north-west from the Lea across the bare uplands of the Chilterns the way lay open to an inroad, and it was to guard this open ground that Eadward seized the ford over the Lea, first by a fort or stockaded mound on the northern side of the river between the little streams of the Maran and the Beane, and then by a like fort on the southern bank, two "burhs" which have since grown into our Hertford.[2] The bend of its present shire-line eastward along the upper course of the Stort and so round by the crest of the Chilterns, may represent the land which Eadward took across the line fixed by the

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 912. [2] *Ib.* a. 913

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

Frith to form a district for his new fortress; but its seizure was not the only sign of a break with East Anglia. Essex, shorn as it was of its western half along the Thames and the Chilterns, still remained a part of Guthrum's kingdom; but Eadward now proceeded to shear away a fresh portion of it by entering its southern districts with an army, and taking post at Maldon on the Blackwater, while his men reared a "burh" a little inland at Witham.

Æthelflæd and the Watling Street.

With the erection of this fortress the Danes were thrown back on the valley of the Colne, and cut off from all access to the mouths of the Thames or the Blackwater, while southern Essex passed into English hands. The line of Guthrum's Frith was now therefore abandoned, and Eadward's frontier led from the sea along the valley of the Chelm, straight westward to Hertford, and thence along the brink of the Thames valley. For the next four years however the King made no further advance, though he was doubtless busy throughout them in organizing his later campaigns and in aiding the more active enterprize of his sister. While Æthelflæd strengthened her western frontier against any inroad from the Welsh by the erection of forts at Scargate and Bridgenorth,[1] she barred any further raids of the Danes upon Mercia by firmly establishing herself on the flank of the Danelaw, and seizing the line of the Watling Street. None of the roads that traversed Roman Britain have remained so famous as this great line of communi-

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 912. This entry however is only preserved in two chronicles, Earle's B. and C., the older Cott. Tib. A. vi. and B. i., both of Worcester origin.

cation. It stretched from London over the chalk downs of Hertfordshire through a lonely and thickly-wooded country to Verulamium, and descending into the low claylands of the Ouse at Dunstable, again mounted the Northamptonshire slopes at Stony Stratford to pass over the clearer tract beyond Towcester into the basin of the Trent. From the moment that it stooped to the lower ground of central Britain its course was dictated by the woodland of Arden. It ran closely along the edge of this great forest, by the bounds of our Leicestershire, and bending round its northern skirt to pass through the narrow gap of open country which parted Arden from Cannock Chase, struck over the central water-shed of Britain to Wroxeter in the Severn valley. From this point its line seems originally to have been prolonged to the Welsh coast near Anglesea; but the size and importance of Chester under the Roman occupation show that a branch road from Wroxeter to that city must soon have come into existence, and along this branch road the main stream of traffic, both to Wales and to north-western Britain, was from that time directed.[1] As the English conquerors crossed its course, however, the tract must have sunk for a while into disuse and silence. But the strangers were awed by the long line that they met so often in their progress, and which their fancy associated with the Milky Way, whose white line of stars were thrown athwart the sky as the white line of the road was thrown athwart

[1] For Watling Street see Guest, "Origines Celticæ," ii. 218 *et seq.* It is doubtful whether the road from Dover to London can claim the name.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

Britain. In their after legend it became "the road that King Wætla's sons made over England from the eastern sea to the sea in the west;" and the memory of this long-lost myth lingers in its later name of the Watling Street.[1]

Tamworth and Stafford.

While Eadward was guarding his flank against the East-Engle, Æthelflæd wrought a like work for Mercia by the fortification of two burhs which commanded this road.[2] The first was Tamworth, whose site marked the point where the new and direct line to Chester diverged from the older Watling Street. A rise of ground (now known as the Castle Hill) breaks the swampy levels at the junction of the Anker with the Tame; and a vill of the Mercian kings had been established here at an early time, which with the little "worth" that grew up about it commanded what was then the only practicable passage over either river to the plains of the Trent. On this rise Æthelflæd threw up a huge mound, crowned with a fortress, portions of

[1] The name is at any rate as old as Ælfred and Guthrum's Frith in 897. Their boundary ran from Bedford "upwards on the Ouse unto Watling Street." (Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 153.) Flor. Worc. a. 1013 explains the name, "id est, strata quam filii Wætlæ regis ab orientale mare usque ad occidentale per Angliam straverunt." Chaucer in his "House of Fame" says,

> "So there, quoth he, cast up thine eye,
> See yonder, lo, the galaxie,
> The which men clept the Milky Way,
> For it is white, and some—par fay—
> Y-callin it han Watlinge Street."

Dr. Guest however prefers, I cannot see why, a derivation from "gwyddel," the "broken men" or robbers in the woods along its course. "Orig. Celt." ii. 234, 235.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worcester), a. 913.

whose brickwork may still be seen as one zig-zags up the steep ascent. From Tamworth however she soon turned to a yet more important point. As the road struck to the north-east, it entered a narrow pass between the heights of Cannock Chase and the channel of the Trent, across which ran the little stream of the Sow, on its way to the greater river. The road crossed this stream at a "stone ford," or paved point of passage; and in guarding this point by the fortress which has grown into our Stafford,[1] Æthelflæd not only blocked all access to the upper Trent, but occupied what, in the physical state of England at the time, was the most important strategical point of Middle Britain.[2]

Æthelflæd and the Fosse Way.

To the north of Arden the Mercian border was now fairly secure. Chester blocked all passage over the Dee; Stafford all passage along the Trent valley; Tamworth any march along the older line of Watling Street on the upper Severn. But to the south of the great forest Mercia still remained accessible by the Fosse Road. The Fosse Way was one of the two great lines of communication which ran athwart Britain from the north-east to the south-west. Its course was roughly parallel to that of its fellow-road, the Icknield Way,[3] and it closely resembled it in character. As the Icknield Way ran along the face of the chalk range from the Gwent of East-Anglia to the Gwent about Old

[1] Eng. Chron. (Worcester), a. 913.

[2] Its importance was recognized by the two successive castles which the Conqueror built here, one in the town itself, the other on a more distant height. Freeman, "Norm. Conq." iv. 318.

[3] See "Making of England," p. 121.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

Sarum, so the Fosse Way ran from Lincoln to Bath along the face of the oolitic range which stretched across Mid-Britain from the estuary of the Severn to the estuary of the Humber.[1] Its course thus led direct from Leicester into the valley of the Avon, and by the Avon valley to the lower Severn and South Wales. It was to block this road and secure central Mercia that Æthelflæd turned as soon as she had ended her work on the Watling Street.[2] After erecting a fortress at Eddisbury, she chose as her main barrier the settlement of the Wærings on a little rise near the sluggish waters of the Avon, about midway along its course, and here she fortified the "burh" which has grown into our Wæringawic or Warwick. For the defence of this settlement she reared[3] between town and river one of those mounds which marked the defensive warfare of the time, and which, stripped as it is of every trace of the fortress with which she crowned it, and covered with works of far later date, still remains to witness to the energy of the lady of Mercia.

Eadward's advance into Mid-Britain.

But though the lines of Trent and Avon were alike secure, and the roads to Wales on either side of Arden wholly in her hands, Æthelflæd's caution was not yet satisfied, and two years more were spent in setting up "burhs" at Cherbury, Warbury, and Runcorn,[4] at the confluence of the Weaver and the Dee. Meanwhile in southern Britain the long delayed

[1] For the Fosse Way see Guest, "Four Roman Ways," "Orig. Celt." ii. 236-237.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worcester), a. 914.

[3] "In fine autumni." Flor. Worc. i. 123.

[4] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 915.

contest became more and more imminent. The king's course was still a slow and cautious one. He had cleared his eastern flank by the conquest of southern Essex, and secured his border-line in that quarter by the "burhs" at Witham and Hertford. But his warfare in the east had probably ended in a new frith with the East-Anglians; for after a rest of four years we find his advance directed not against East-Anglia, but against the Danes of Mid-Britain or the Five Boroughs. The nearest of their settlements lay just northward of the valley of the Thames, in the upper valley of the Ouse. Here, in earlier days, the house of the Bokings had planted their "ham" of Buckingham on the little stream, and since the making of the Danelaw this "ham" had been the southernmost of the Danish settlements in mid-Britain; with Bedford and Huntingdon in fact it formed a line of towns, each with its jarl and army, which held the valley of the Ouse. It was in the hands of Jarl Thurcytel "and his holds" when in 918 Eadward marched to attack it. A siege of four weeks made him its master;[1] and here as elsewhere he built "burhs" on either side the river to guard its passage, as well as to bar any raid upon the valley of the Thames. The capture of the town, however, was followed by the submission of its jarl and its holds; and the severity of the blow was shown by a like submission of "almost all the chief men that belonged to Bedford, and also many that belonged to Northampton."

Their submission drew the king onward both

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 918.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

Conquest of Mid-Britain.

to the eastward and to the north. In 919 he marched along the Ouse through the flat meadows of Olney upon Bedford,[1] which offered no resistance, and which he guarded by a "burh" on the southern bank of the stream. Two years later, in 921, he pushed forward on to the upland of Mid-Britain, and seized and fortified the site of the ruined Towcester. Meanwhile he was providing with his old caution against danger at either end of his long line by erecting fresh fortresses at Maldon in Essex, and at Wigmore in our Herefordshire. But cautious as his advance had been, its real import could no longer be disguised, and the seizure of Towcester roused the Danes of Mid-Britain into action. Not only the Danes of Northampton and of Leicester but the whole force of the Five Boroughs made a fierce onset on the burh at Towcester. Fierce as it was, however, it was beaten off by the new townsmen. Eadward hastened to secure the town, which must have been guarded as yet only by a trench and stockade, with a wall of stone;[2] and the presence of his arms brought about the submission of Northampton, with Jarl Thurfrith and its host, as well as the district which obeyed it, a district which stretched as far as the Welland.

Conquest of East-Anglia.

But while the king was thus pressing on the Five Boroughs, a far fiercer conflict was raging on his flank. The Danes of East-Anglia had sprung to arms even before their fellow Danes in central Britain; and in this quarter fighting had been going on through the whole year. Early in the spring the Danes of Hunt-

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 919. [2] Ib. a. 921.

ingdon threw themselves fruitlessly on the new burh at Bedford; and then quitting Huntingdon set up a fresh encampment at Tempsford, where they were soon attacked by the English fyrd of the neighbouring districts. The capture of Tempsford, with its king, jarls,[1] and warriors, gave fresh heart to the assailants; and a force of Englishmen drew together from Kent, Surrey, and Essex for the siege of Colchester. Their success was again complete; the town was stormed, and its defenders slain; while a counter raid of the Danes upon Maldon ended in the utter rout of the pirates. It was at this moment that the completion of the walls of Towcester and the submission of Northampton set Eadward free to act in the east. His first blow was at the district about the Fens. A few miles march over the flat Ouse-country brought him to the spot where the English village of Godmanchester was rising by the ruins of the Roman Durolipons on the road that skirted the Wash. On a rise across the river which was then the "Hunters-down," stood the fortress which the owners had so lately abandoned—a fortress of importance as commanding the passage of the Ouse, whose site, as well as that of the burh with which Eadward replaced it, is still marked by the mounds which rise over the river.[2] Master of the whole Ouse-valley, a fresh march of the king to Colchester, and his rebuilding of the town, was followed by the sudden submission of all the Danes of East-Anglia and Essex, as well as of

[1] Toglos and Manna, Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 921.
[2] Eng. Chron. a. 921.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

the "here" which found its centre at Cambridge; and no part of the Fen country remained to the Danelaw save the northern tract about Stamford. The town stood on a stone-ford over the Welland, and was one of the Five Boroughs, with its twelve lawmen and Danish burghers and common lands beyond the walls. But it submitted when the king and his fyrd marched on it in 922; and its obedience was secured by a mound and fort which Eadward raised over against it on the opposite bank of the river in what became a southern "burh" of lesser size.[1]

Æthelflæd attacks the Five Boroughs.

What had made the king's triumph in Mid-Britain so easy and complete was to a great extent, no doubt, the energy of his sister in the west. While the English shire-levies cleared East-Anglia on one flank of his advance, Æthelflæd was mastering the Five Boroughs on the other. The march of Eadward on Northampton had in fact been made possible by the triumphs of the Mercian host in the valley of the Trent. As the river curves from the heights of Cannock Chase to the eastward, it receives the waters of two important affluents from the north and south. The Derwent flows down to it from the crags of the Peak, while the Soar wanders to it through the grassy levels of our Leicestershire. On one of these rivers the earlier English conquerors had planted their settlement of North-weorthig, whose position in the waste among the wild animals of the chase was marked by the new name it had received from the Danes, the name of Deora-by, or Derby.[2] Under the Danes the place

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 922.

[2] Æthelweard, a. 870, lib. iv. c. 2.

became one of the Five Boroughs round which the Danelaw of Mid-Britain grouped itself, and it was the first of the five to bear Æthelflæd's attack. In the August of 917 it passed into her hands,[1] and in 918 she marched up the valley on her other flank, that of the Soar, to attack the second of the Five Boroughs, Leicester. Again her attack was successful, and within the walls of her own conquest she is said to have heard of the submission of York.[2]

Mid-Britain conquered.

The news of this last triumph however had hardly reached Eadward when it was followed by the news of Æthelflæd's death.[3] But the blow came too late to save the Danelaw. Only two of the Five Boroughs indeed now remained unconquered; and Eadward's siege of the first of these, Nottingham, completed the work of the year. The town stood on the bend of the Trent, a few miles eastward of the confluence of the Derwent and the Soar. It was here that the road from the south crossed the great river, for further along its course the marshes of Axholme hindered all passage; and the importance of the place had been shown at the very outset of the Danish wars when its seizure by the pirates foiled the efforts of Æthelred and Ælfred to save the north from their grasp. In size and wealth it was probably with Lincoln the most important of the Five Boroughs, while as a strategical point it was more important than any, for it

[1] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 917.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 918, says of the Yorkmen: "Some gave her pledge, some bound themselves with oath, that they would be at her reding" (command).

[3] Eadward was at Stamford at this time. Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 922.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

commanded the navigation of the Trent, while it was the key alike of Northumbria and Central Britain. The closing of Eadward's forces upon Nottingham[1] in 922 was thus the crisis of the war. The town yielded and was secured for the while by a fortress on the southern bank of the river, while the king reaped the fruits of his success in the submission of the whole Mercian Danelaw, for Lincoln, whose fate is not mentioned, no doubt submitted on the fall of Nottingham.

The principle of personal allegiance.

With the clearing of the Trent valley the conquest of Mid-Britain was complete. Guthrum's kingdom and the Five Boroughs had alike bowed to Eadward's sword. But the work of conquest was far from being the only work of Eadward during these memorable years. It is indeed the administrative reconstruction which went hand in hand with the king's campaign that accounts for the slowness and caution of his advance. How firmly he clung to the idea which his title of "King of the Anglo-Saxons" embodies, the idea of a single people ruled directly by a single king, was shown in his dealing with the Mercian ealdormanry. On the death of Æthelflæd the last traces of Mercian independence were suppressed; the girl whom his sister had left behind her was sent to a nunnery; and the kingdom, with its Welsh dependencies, brought under Eadward's direct government.[2] The districts of the conquered Danelaw were

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 922.

[2] "And all the people of the land of Mercia . . . submitted to him; and the kings of the North-Welsh, Howel and Cledauc and Jeothwel and all the North-Welsh people sought him to be their lord." Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 922.

in the same way brought into the general realm. But they were brought into it in a very different way from Mercia. The conditions of the struggle indeed were giving a wholly new character to the relations of the people towards its rulers. The war had violently hastened forward a revolution which had long been silently changing the whole structure of English society. Even at the time of their first settlement in Britain the invaders had passed beyond the stage of merely personal right, the stage in which freedom, law, and government are regarded as inherent in the freeman himself, and in which a share in the common land of the tribe falls to the share of the freeman because he is free. Though traces of this older personal bond remained in the gathering of the kin in their separate villages, as in the allotment of the soil to the heads of families, yet land had even then become the inseparable accompaniment of the freeman, the badge and test of his freedom: he was a freeman because he was a land-owner.[1] But it was long before the relation of the freeman to the land wholly obliterated the older conception of personal freedom. In earlier English history the small holder and the big holder stood equal in law-moot or in witenagemot, and even the landless man might choose what lord he would. But at the close of the Danish wars we find a new organization of the people almost complete. The tendency towards personal dependence, and towards a social organization based on personal dependence, had received an overpowering impulse from the strife. The

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 194.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

long insecurity of a century of warfare had driven the ceorl, the free tiller of the soil, to seek protection more and more from the wealthier landowner or thegn beside him. The poorer freeman "commended" himself to a lord who promised aid; and as the price of this aid surrendered his freehold to receive it back as a fief laden with conditions of military service. Henceforth his lord owns the land he tills; he is his leader to the host, he is the lord of the court at which he seeks for justice. The military, the judicial, the political organization of the people had thus become inseparably linked to the ownership of land.[1]

Its influence on the English kingship.

How quickly the principle of personal allegiance to a lord of land widened into a general theory of dependence we see from the changes it brought about in the English kingship. Whatever bonds of the older tribal sort might link the children of Ælfred to the men of their own Wessex, it was only as possessors of the soil, as lords of the land, that they could claim the obedience of Mercian or Northumbrian. To the tribal character of the kingship, which blended the king with those whom he ruled, was thus added a territorial character in which he stood wholly apart from them, and in which the relation was no longer one of traditional loyalty but of actual subjection. Still more was this the case with the conquered Dane. No tie of traditional loyalty bound the northern settler on the Ouse or the Trent to the kings who had struck him down. The only possible tie could be that of acknowledging

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 217-222.

the new master as a lord, and claiming his "peace" or protection in exchange for allegiance. It is thus that the conquest of the Danelaw was followed by the earliest instances of those oaths of allegiance, which mark the substitution of a personal dependence on the king as lord for the older relation of the freeman to the king of his race.

The oath of allegiance.

Eadward had already proposed to the Witan of his own Wessex,[1] that for the maintenance of the public peace they should "be in that fellowship in which the king was, and love that which he loved, and shun that which he shunned, both on sea and land;" and this principle of personal allegiance he applied to his new conquests. As he pushed over the country, the Danish hosts who yielded to him swore to hold him for their lord, to be one with him, to will all that he willed, to keep peace with all in his peace. At Buckingham, Jarl Thurcytel "sought to him to be his lord, and all the holds, and almost all the chief men who owed obedience to Bedford." Further north, "Thurferth the Jarl and the captains and all the army which owed obedience to Northampton as far north as the Welland . . . sought him to be their lord and protector." At Huntingdon all who were left of the Danes "sought his peace and protection." Finally "all the army among the East Anglians swore union with him that they would do all he would, and would observe peace towards all to which the king should grant peace both by sea and land; and the army which owed obedience to Cambridge chose him specially to be

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 163.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

their lord and protector, and confirmed it with oaths, even as he then decreed it."[1] In this way no change was made in the actual organization of the country within the Danelaw. Its jarls, its holds, were left gathered round their towns as before. But they had taken Eadward for their lord, and bound themselves by a bond of allegiance to him. As the English could not be less closely connected with their king than the Danes, such an allegiance soon spread beyond the limits of the Danelaw, and became the bond of the nation at large. In Eadmund's day all men swore to be faithful to the king as a man is faithful to his lord, loving what he loves, and shunning what he shuns.[2] The king has in fact become the lord; the freeman has become the king's man; the public peace, or observance of the customary right by man towards man, has become the king's peace, the observance of which is due to the will of the lord, and the breach of which is a personal offence against him.

Eadward and the north.

The caution of Eadward however in his advance over the Danelaw was dictated not only by these administrative difficulties, but by a sense of the military difficulties of his task. Fight his way onward as he might, and firmly as he secured every step in his path by mound and burh, he knew that the Danes of Mid-Britain were still far from being definitely conquered. After all the triumphs of Eadward and of his son, we shall see the Five Boroughs break out in a fierce revolt against their successor, and for a

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 918, 921.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 252.

while drive the West Saxons back over the Watling Street. With the existing military system in fact, it was impossible to bridle the Danes by efficient garrisons, while to bring them to a contented acquiescence in English rule was necessarily a work of time. We can hardly doubt that it was a sense of this danger in his rear, as well as of the formidable nature of the work to be done in the north, which made Eadward halt for a while at the Trent. Instead of a direct march on Northumbria he turned to a distant line of operations, whose aim seemed rather that of defence than of attack. From any direct onset of the Northumbrian Danes on his front the king was nearly secure. The fortresses at Nottingham and Stafford, with the other "burhs" on their flank and rear, made a passage of the Trent difficult, if not impossible. But on his north-western flank Eadward felt more open to attack. Not only might the Danes of Northumbria break over the western moors by the old Roman road from York to the Ribble to call the North Welsh to arms, but the Ostmen from Ireland might by a short march across the same wild tract bring aid to their brethren in Northumbria. It was indeed this constant succour from Ireland which made the after conquest of the northern Danelaw so long and arduous a task: and we can hardly doubt that it was a sense of the need of isolating Northumbria from both Welshmen and Ostmen ere he could safely attack it which guided the work of Eadward in the north-west.

His fortresses in the north-west.

In seizing the estuaries of the Dee and the Mersey by her "burhs" at Chester and Runcorn, Æthelflæd

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

had closed the natural landing-places by which the Ostmen could make their way to York; but the king aimed at barring their path by fortresses which commanded every road across the moors. While with his own host therefore he set about the building of a town at Thelwell in 923, he sent a Mercian force to occupy the old Roman town at Mancunium. To the north of the estuary of the Mersey a triangular mass of hill and moorland juts out from the Pennine range towards the sea, a tract whose slopes and stream-valleys are now the homes of a mighty industry, but which then was silent and desolate.[1] On the southern side of this tract its waters gathered together at a point where the road over the moors from Eboracum came down upon the plain; and at this point had grown up under the Roman occupation the town of Mancunium. Since Æthelfrith's day the town had doubtless lain in ruin: but life was probably already flowing back to a site marked out for the dwelling of man, when in 923 Eadward renewed and "manned" the walls of Manchester.[2] In the following year he linked these outlying strongholds with his general line by a burh at Bakewell, on the upper Derwent among the hills of the Peak, a point about mid-way between Manchester and the new English conquest of Derby, while he strengthened the key of his position on the Trent by throwing a bridge over the river at Nottingham, and securing it by a second mound and stockade on the southern bank.[3]

[1] It still formed part of Northumbria. Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 923. "Manchester in Northumbria."

[2] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 923.

[3] *Ibid.* a. 924.

Wessex and the north.

Efficient as these fortresses were for purposes of defence, they were as efficient for purposes of attack; for from Manchester, or Bakewell, or Nottingham alike, the forces of Eadward could close upon York, whether by the western moors, or through the fastnesses of the Peak, or by the marshy levels along the Don. Eadward seems in fact to have been preparing for a more formidable struggle than any he had as yet undertaken, a struggle not with the Danes of Northumbria only, but with the leagued peoples of all northern Britain. His victories had wholly changed the political relations which had till now existed between the northern states of Britain and the West-Saxon kings. During Ælfred's days, as through the earlier days of his son, fear of the Danes had driven the Britons of Strath-Clyde, with the Bernicians under the house of Eadwulf, to seek the friendship, if not the aid, of the house of Cerdic. The same fear had told even more powerfully on the kingdom of the Scots. Pirate raids had been shattering the Scot-realm for a hundred years, when in Ælfred's days[1] a Norse Earldom was set up in the Orkneys and became the base for a more systematic attack. From this base the "black strangers" had ever since been conquering and colonizing the western Hebrides and winning inch by inch the mainland.[2] From Caithness and the tract to which they have left their name of "Southern-land," or Sutherland, they pushed over Ross and Moray till, under its present king, Constantine, the Scot-kingdom had practically shrunk to little

[1] Soon after 883. Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 344, note.

[2] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 341, seq.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901.
937.

more than the basin of the Tay. Pressed between the Northmen of the Orkneys and the Danes of the Danelaw, the Scots, and in a lesser degree, their western and southern neighbours in Strath-Clyde and Bernicia, looked naturally with friendship to the power in the south which held the Danes at bay.

Submission of the northern league.

But with the triumphs of Eadward and his sister the dread of the Danes was lifted from these northern states; and no sooner was it removed than it was replaced by a dread of the West-Saxons themselves. As Æthelflæd pushed the Danelaw further from the Welsh border, we see Welsh princes abandoning the West-Saxon alliance, and turning, though unsuccessfully, to the Dane. And at this moment the approach of Eadward, the steady closing round of his West-Saxon and Mercian hosts, seems to have worked as complete a change of policy in the north. In the gathering of 924 we catch the first signs of that general league of its states which was again and again to front the West-Saxon sovereigns, till it was finally broken by the statesmanship of Eadmund. While Eadward was establishing his base of operations along the south-west of Northumbria, the Scot-king Constantine, with the princes of Strath-Clyde and the lord of Bernicia, seem to have gathered to the aid of the Northumbrians. But if this were so, panic must have broken the dream of war, for we know only of this gathering by the submission to which it led. Eadward was already on his march by the route which led through the hills of the Peak, when his advance was arrested, probably at the point whose significant name of "Dor"

or "door" marked the pass that opened from them on to the Northumbrian border, and where a hundred years before the north had submitted to Ecgberht. Instead of fighting, the motley company of allies sought Eadward's camp among the hills and owned him as "father and lord."[1]

Æthelstan.

The triumph over the northern league was hardly won when in the opening of 925 Eadward died at Fearndun in Mercia,[2] and his son Æthelstan mounted the throne.[3] After tradition preserved lovingly the

[1] "And him chose there to father and lord the Scot-king and all Scot-folk, and Regnald, and Eadulf's son, and all that dwelt in Northumbria, whether Englishmen or Danish or Northmen or other, and eke the King of the Strath-Clyde Welshmen, aud all Strath-Clyde Welshmen." Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 924. No passage has been more fiercely fought over than this, since the legists of the English court made it the groundwork of the claims which the English crown advanced on the allegiance of Scotland; and it has of late been elaborately discussed by Mr. Robertson on the one side ("Scotland under her Early Kings," ii. 384) and Mr. Freeman on the other ("Norm. Conq." i. Appendix G.). The entry cannot be contemporary, for Regnald, whom it makes king in Northumbria, had died three years before, in 921, nor is there indeed ground for placing the compilation of this section of the Chronicle of Winchester earlier than 975, or the end of Eadgar's reign, some fifty years after the "Commendation" (Earle, Intro. xix-xxii.); and as the "imperial" claims of the English crown seem to date pretty much from the later days of Eadgar or the beginning of Æthelred's reign, an entry made at that time would naturally take its form from them. I cannot see any difference between this submission of the league in 924 and the subsequent submissions of the same confederates after their later outbreaks against Æthelstan, which are clearly mere episodes in the struggle for supremacy in the north.

[2] For date see Eng. Chron. (Winch.) a. 925; for place, Eng. Chron. (Worc.) (D.) a. 924.

[3] In the Eng. Chron. of Worcester (or Mercia) we are carefully

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901. 937.

memory of Æthelstan's outer aspect, of his slight though vigorous frame, and of his golden hair.[1] Nor did it dwell less lovingly on the character of his rule. In outer greatness indeed, in his exploits at home as in the position he occupied in the European world, no king of Cerdic's line could vie with the son of Eadward. Nor was his temper less great. The sudden failure of our information leaves his reign in some ways darker than those of his predecessors; for the Chronicle of Winchester breaks down into meagre annals with Eadward's death, and from brilliant historic light we pass suddenly into almost utter darkness.[2] But the king's acts speak for themselves. Through a reign of fifteen years we see no sign of weakness. At home Æthelstan proved himself worthy

told that Æthelstan was "chosen king by the Mercians, and hallowed at Kingston." The entry shows how stubbornly the Mercian kingdom clung to its separate existence, and how far it was still from regarding itself as fused in a single England. As king of the West-Saxons Æthelstan was doubtless chosen and hallowed at Winchester.

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 213. See also the tradition of his learning, *ib.* p. 209 (A.S.G.).

[2] From 925 to 975 is the most meagre section of the Winchester Chronicle (Earle, "Par. Chron." Introd. pp. xviii.-xxii.). The first twelve annals of this period only fill as many lines; and the story becomes even more jejune as it proceeds, till in Eadgar's day the historic thread is almost wholly lost, though the meagre entries are broken by four great pieces of verse. For Æthelstan's reign we are a little helped by a few insertions in the Worcester copy of the Chronicle (Earle's D.). Our main aid is from William of Malmesbury, who had before him a life of Æthelstan which is now lost. William's enthusiasm for Æthelstan however is partly attributable to the king's bounty to Malmesbury.

of the knightly sword with which Ælfred had girded him in his childhood: he was a great soldier and a firm ruler. But his ability found a wider sphere than in his own island realm. His temper indeed was European rather than merely English; and in his foreign policy he showed a breadth of conception, a faculty of combination, a diplomatic adroitness, which was new in the history of our kings. From Æthelwulf onwards the royal house of Wessex had drawn closer to a union with the states of the Continent; but Æthelstan carried out this tendency with a large and well-devised scheme of policy which bound Western Europe together against the common enemy.

League of Danes, Scots, and Welsh.

Before him, at the very outset of his reign, lay the difficulty of the north. Eadward's plans for its conquest had been checked, first by the submission of its chieftains to his supremacy, and then by his death; and the reduction of this remaining half of the Danelaw thus fell to the lot of his son. For the moment Æthelstan seemed content with the same acknowledgement of his supremacy which had satisfied his father, but the tie was drawn closer by a matrimonial alliance. In January, 925, the ruler of the Danes of York, Sihtric, appeared at Æthelstan's court, which was then at Tamworth, and took the king's sister to wife.[1] The bond however soon snapped: for in 926 Sihtric died, as it would seem by a violent death, which may have been provoked by this submission to the English king; and a renewal of the old confederacy which had met his father warned

[1] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 925.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

Æthelstan that the time had come to complete his work. His armies marched over the border: the northern Danelaw passed into his hands without a blow;[1] and its allies bowed to him with as little resistance. In July Æthelstan was met at a place called Eamot by Howel, King of the North-Welsh, and Owen of Gwent, as well as by the Bernician Ealdred from Bamborough and the Scot-king Constantine, "and with pledge and with oaths they bound fast the peace."[2] But the Welsh had still to make amends for their disaffection. Summoning the chiefs of the North-Welsh before him at Hereford, Æthelstan forced them to own his overlordship as Mercian king, to pay a yearly tribute of corn and cattle, and to accept the Wye as a boundary between Welshmen and Englishmen. The West-Welsh must have shared in the restlessness of their race, for from Hereford the king marched to Exeter, and, driving the Britons from the half of the town they had hitherto occupied, girded it with a wall of stone.[3] Then pushing forward to the Land's End, he forced the Cornwealas to an

[1] Guthferth, Sihtric's son and successor, was driven out, says Sim. Durh. "Gest. Reg." a. 927. The Canterbury Chronicle (Earle, E.) places this in 927.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.) a. 926. Mr. Skene ("Celtic Scotland," i. 351) thinks that by some after words, "and they renounced all idolatry, and after that submitted to him in peace," the Chronicle "stamps its own statement with doubt." The words however may be only a misplaced bit of the actual convention with the Danes of Deira. As to the submission itself, I think it may fairly be questioned whether this is not the real transaction which the Winchester Chronicler (here of no great authority) has transferred to the last year of Eadward the Elder.

[3] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. p. 214.

engagement on a field which tradition places at the hamlet of Bolleit by St. Buryan's, where two huge stones are said to mark the burial-place of those who fell in the final overthrow of their race. The Tamar was fixed as a boundary for the West-Welsh of Cornwall, as the Wye had been made a boundary for the North-Welsh of our Wales. From this moment indeed we may look upon both peoples as integral parts of the English kingdom, owning their oneness with it by tribute, though in North Wales at least breaking their allegiance by occasional revolt.

Æthelstan king of Northumbria.

That Æthelstan's campaigns in the west did their work is plain from the fact that in the later troubles of his reign we hear no more of West-Welsh or North-Welsh risings. His work too seemed fairly done in the north. As yet all was quiet there. Æthelstan carried out his father's policy of a national union in the person of the king by taking to himself the throne of Northumbria; already King of Wessex and King of Mercia, he became in 926, after Sihtric's death, king of the Northumbrians.[1] The new realm showed no signs of disaffection; the jarls of the Danelaw indeed, Guthrum and Urm, Odda and Anlaf, Regnwald and Scule, Thurferth and Halfdene, Haward and Gunner, sate peacefully in witenagemots among Æthelstan's ealdormen. In the same great assemblies Rodward, the Archbishop of York, sate side by side with the Archbishop of Canterbury.[2] We have

[1] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 926.

[2] In 929, perhaps in a witenagemot at York, we find among the signatures of "duces et cæteri optimates" those of Guthrum, Urm, Odda, Anlaf, as well as of "Rodeward quoque Archi-

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

already seen the importance which the destruction of the neighbouring sees, and his lonely position as representing the Engle and the Christianity of the north, had given to the northern primate. It was through him, above all, that Æthelstan could win hold on the newly-conquered kingdom; and in 934 the death of Rodward enabled the king to secure, as it seemed, this support by the appointment of a new archbishop of his own, Wulfstan,[1] while grants to Beverley and Ripon[2] secured the loyalty of the northern clergy. But Æthelstan was as eager to win over Danes as Englishmen. As we have seen, the fusion of the two races had already begun. Even in Ælfred's day we find a young Dane among the scholars at Athelney, Frisian sailors manning the royal long ships, and Norwegians like Othere at court, owning the king as their lord. The earlier

præsul cum Eboracensis suffraganeis" (Cod. Dip. 347). The Archbishop signs another charter of the same year with "Urmus Dux" and "Guthrummus dux" (Cod. Dip. 348). At Lewton, in 931, Orm, Guthrum, Haward, Gunner, Thurferth, Hadd, and Scule, sign as "duces" (Cod. Dip. 353). In the great Witenagemot of Colchester in 931 we find Guthrum, Thurum, Haward, Regenwold, Hadd, and Scule as "duces" (Cod. Dip. 1102), and the Archbishop of York. Archbishop Wulfstan again appears in 932 in an equally large witenagemot at Middleton with Uhtred, Thesberd, Guthrum, Urm, Regnwald, Hatel, Scule, Thurferth, and "Imper" (Cod. Dip. 1107), and in the Witenagemot of Winchester, 934, with "Inhwær, Halfdene, Oswulf, Scule, and Hadd" (Cod. Dip. 364).

[1] The first charter with his signature, if genuine, must belong to this year. Cod. Dip. 350, with note.

[2] Cod. Dip. 358 (spurious), and the equally spurious riming charters to Beverley, Cod. Dip. 359, 360, preserve the memory of these grants.

days of Eadward saw the Danes of Northumbria take a West-Saxon Ætheling for their king, and the Danes of East-Anglia follow him as their war-leader. The war brought the northmen into close relations, if not with the English, at any rate with their royal house; and the personal relation which the oath of allegiance had established between the king and his new subjects was more than maintained by Æthelstan. Odo, one of his favourite clerks and counsellors, whom he raised about 926 to the bishopric of Ramsbury,[1] and who afterwards became Archbishop of Canterbury, was certainly of Danish blood, and said to be the son of one of the pagan warriors who landed with Ivar and Hubba.[2] In all the northern sagas he is represented, in contrast to his successor, as a friend to the northmen; and though tales like that in the saga of Egil Skallogrimson, of the service of Egil and his brother Thorolf under Æthelstan's banner, can hardly be accepted as history, they at any rate preserve the belief of the north that Æthelstan maintained a force of its warriors at his court, and loved to listen to its skalds.

His Witenagemots.

As yet this policy of fusion seemed fairly successful; for Northumbria showed no signs of resistance, and the king's peaceful march on York was followed by eight years of as peaceful acquiescence in his rule. The submission of the Welsh too seemed complete; for

[1] Stubbs, "Registr. Sacr. Anglic." p. 14.

[2] "Dicunt quidam quod ex ipsis Danis pater ejus esset, qui cum classica cohorte cum Huba et Hinwar veniebant." Vit. S. Oswaldi Anon., Raine's "Historians of Ch. of York," i. 404. "Hic, ut fertur, Ethelstano regi valde carus esset et acceptus," Eadmer's "Life of Oswald," Angl. Sac. ii. 192.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

their "under-kings" Howel and Judwal, Morcant and Owen, sate in the great witenagemots[1] which mark this period of Æthelstan's reign. In Æthelstan's witenagemots indeed, in the number and variety of their attendants, England saw somewhat of a foreshadowing of national life.[2] Never before had Danish jarls and Welsh princes, the primate of the north and the primate of the south, nobles and thegns from Northumbria and East-Anglia as from Mercia and Wessex, met in a common gathering to give rede and counsel to a common king. As witan from every quarter of the land stood about his throne men realized how the King of Wessex had risen into the King of England. Such assemblies could not fail to gather rights about them, though the rights of the witan were determined rather by their actual power as great lords and prelates than by any constitutional theory. But the old Germanic tradition, which associated "the wise men" in all royal action, gave a constitutional ground to the powers which the witenagemot exercized more and more as English society took a more and more aristocratic form; and

[1] In that of Lewton in 931 we find Howel and Judwal; in another of 931, Howel, Judwal, Morcant, Eugenius; in one of 932, Howel, Judwal, Morcant, Wurgeat; in the Winchester witenagemot of 934, Howel, Judwal, Teowdor; in the Frome witenagemot of 934, Howel alone. Cod. Dip. 353, 1103, 1107, 364, 1110.

[2] The witenagemot at Lewton in 931 numbered ninety-four persons: two archbishops, two Welsh under-kings, seventeen bishops, fifteen duces, and fifty-nine "ministers." Cod. Dip. 353. That of Colchester (March, 931), numbered sixty-nine attendants; that of Middleton (August, 932), eighty-six. Cod. Dip. 1102, 1107.

it thus came to share with the crown in the higher justice, in the imposition of taxes, the making of laws, the conclusion of treaties, the control of war, the disposal of public lands, the appointment of bishops and great officers of state. There were times when it claimed even to elect or depose a king.[1]

Public order.

Under Æthelstan however its work was simply a work of order. The disturbance of society which had been brought about by the Danish wars had forced this work on the king from the very outset of his reign.[2] The laws enacted in a "great synod" at Greatley, near Andover, for the central provinces, repeated at a witenagemot at Exeter[3] for the provinces of the west, and again promulgated in like meetings of witan at Feversham and Thunresfeld for Kent and for Surrey, were in effect a code for the regulation of public order,[4] and above all for the defence of property. The defiance of justice by nobles and thegns, before which the local

[1] Kemble, "Saxons in Eng." ii. cap. vi.

[2] "That they would all hold the frith, as King Æthelstan and his witan had counselled it, first at Greatanlea and again at Exeter and afterwards at Feversham, and a fourth time at Thunresfeld before the archbishop and all the bishops and his witan, whom the king himself named who were thereat." "Dooms of London," Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," vol. i. p. 241. "All the witan gave their weds together to the archbishop at Thunresfeld, when Ælfeah Stybb and Bryhtnoth Odda's son came to meet the witenagemot by the king's command." Ib. p. 239.

[3] "At midwinter." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 221.

[4] We may note that their scope extends only to Wessex: Mercia and the Danelaw had still their separate systems of legislation and government.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901.
937.

courts were helpless, stood foremost among the evils of the time. It was an evil which only the growing developement of the "king's justice" could meet. "If any be so rich or of such great kindred," ran the Exeter law, "that he cannot be kept back from robbery or the defence of robbers, let him be taken out of that country with wife and child and all his goods into that part of this kingdom that the king wills, be he who he may, whether one of the thegns or villeins, on terms that he never return into his own land."[1] Nor could any save the king deal with the abuses of the sokes, or private jurisdictions like the later manorial courts, with "the lord who denies justice and upholds his evil-doing men," the "lord who is privy to his theow's theft," or the "reeve who is privy to the thieves who have stolen."[2] Other regulations furthered the social revolution which was replacing the freeman by the lord and his man. For the lordless man, "of whom no law can be got," his kindred were to find a lord in the folk-moot, or he was to be held for an outlaw and slain like a thief.[3] On the other hand a lord, "who has so many men that he cannot personally have all in his own keeping," was bound to set over each dependent township a reeve, not only to exact his lord's dues, but to enforce his justice within its bounds.[4]

Public wealth.

The growth of public wealth in the midst of this violence was shown by the prominence which the king

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 218.

[2] Ib. i. 201. [3] Ib. p. 201.

[4] "Præponat sibi singulis villis præpositum unum." Ll. Æthelst., Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 217.

gives to laws affecting property. Theft becomes one of the greatest of crimes; no thief was to be spared who was taken "red handed," or who strove to defend himself or to flee from arrest.[1] Trade dealings were protected by regulations whose severity defeated its own end. No man might "exchange any property without the witness of the reeve or of the mass-priest, or of the land-lord, or of the hordere, or of other unlying man." The regulation that all marketing was to be "within port" or market town, nor was any bargaining lawful on Sundays,[2] had but a brief life, for in the mid-winter meeting at Exeter it was explicitly repealed:—"Let all the dooms made at Greatley be kept, save those about marketing within port and selling on Sundays."[3] Another enactment shows us that the growth of trade to which these regulations point was giving a new importance to the question of the coinage. In the early ages of the English occupation we find only a coarse imitation of the later Roman coinage; and rude and base as this money was, it probably sufficed for a land whose exchange was mainly conducted by barter. The laws against mutilation of cattle—laws really directed against the damage done to a beast which in a perfect state was the general medium of exchange—and the fact that these laws are embodied in Ine's code, prove that such a mode of payment was still common in the opening of the eighth century in Wessex. But in Kent, the neighbourhood of Gaul and the growth of trade would narrow the sphere of such cattle-

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 199.
[2] Ib. 205, 207, 213.
[3] Ib. 218.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

barter; and the assessment of the "wer" throughout Æthelberht's law in coin shows that specie-payment was common there a century before Ine's day. It was not however till Offa's reign that the growing commerce, as well, no doubt, as the growth of internal trade, forced the regulation of the coinage on the English kings as a political matter; and it is significant that Offa drew his standard of value from the coinage of the Frankish kings.[1] But the union of the kingdoms had now made the substitution of a national coinage for these local mintages a necessity. "Let there be one money over all the king's land," ran the new law; "and let no man mint save within port." The list of towns where mints were established gives us a rough indication of the comparative greatness of the boroughs in southern Britain. London stood at their head with eight moneyers, Canterbury followed with seven, Winchester with six, Rochester had three coiners, Lewes, Southampton, Wareham, Exeter, and Shaftesbury two, Hastings, Chichester, and "other burhs" but one.[2]

Frith-gilds

The real difficulty however lay not in making, but in enforcing the law; for strong as the crown might be its strength lay in the king's personal action, and it was far from possessing any adequate police or judicial machinery for carrying its will into effect. To supply such a machinery was the aim of the frith-gilds. Society and justice, as we have seen, had till now rested on the basis of the family, on the kinsfolk bound together in ties of mutual responsibility to

[1] See Robertson, "Histor. Essays," p. 63.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 207, 209.

each other and to the law. As society became more complex and less stationary, it necessarily outgrew these ties of blood, and in England this dissolution of the family bond seems to have taken place at the very time when Danish incursions and the growth of a feudal temper among the nobles rendered an isolated existence most perilous for the freeman. His only resource was to seek protection among his fellow-freemen, and to replace the older brotherhood of the kinsfolk by a voluntary association of his neighbours for the same purposes of order and self-defence. The tendency to unite in such "frith-gilds" or peace-clubs became general throughout Europe during the ninth and tenth centuries, but on the Continent it was roughly met and repressed. The successors of Charles the Great enacted penalties of scourging, nose-slitting, and banishment against voluntary unions, and even a league of the poor peasants of Gaul against the inroads of the northmen was suppressed by the swords of the Frankish nobles. In England the attitude of the kings was utterly different. The system known at a later time as "frank-pledge," or free engagement of neighbour for neighbour, was accepted after the Danish wars as the base of social order. Ælfred recognized the common responsibility of the members of the "frith-gild" side by side with that of the kinsfolk, and Æthelstan accepted "frith-gilds" as a constituent element of borough life in the dooms of London.[1] In the frith-gild an oath of mutual fidelity among its members

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," vol. i. Ine, pp. 113, 117; Ælfred, pp. 79, 81; Æthelstan, pp. 229, 237.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

was substituted for the tie of blood, while the gild-feast, held once a month in the common-hall, replaced the gathering of the kinsfolk round their family-hearth. But within this new family the aim of the gild was to establish a mutual responsibility as close as that of the old. "Let all share the same lot," ran its law; "if any misdo, let all bear it." A member could look for aid from his gild-brothers in atoning for any guilt incurred by mishap; he could call on them for assistance in case of violence or wrong; if falsely accused they appeared in court as his compurgators; if poor they supported, and when dead, they buried him. On the other hand he was responsible to them as they were to the state for order and obedience to the laws. A wrong of brother against brother was a wrong against the general body of the gild, and was punished by fine, or in the last resort by expulsion, which left the offender a "lawless" man and an outcast. The one difference between these gilds in country and town was that in the latter case, from their close local neighbourhood, they tended inevitably to coalesce. Imperfect as their union might be, when once it was effected, the town passed from a mere collection of brotherhoods into an organized community, whose character was inevitably determined by the circumstances of its origin.

The shire.

While the frith-gild was thus supplying one at least of the elements of a new municipal life within English boroughs, a new organization of the country at large was going on in the institution of the shire. In the earlier use of the word, "shire" had simply answered to "division." The town of York was parted

into seven such shires. There were six "small shires" in Cornwall. The old kingdom of Deira has left indications of its divisions in our Richmondshire, Kirbyshire, Riponshire, Hallamshire, Islandshire, and Norhamshire; just as their lathes and rapes represent perhaps the old shires of the kingdoms of Kent and of Surrey. The name was used even for ecclesiastical divisions of territory; a diocese is a "bishop's shire;"[1] a parish is a "kirk shire." But in its later form of a territorial division for purely administrative purposes, the shire was in fact the creation of an artificial "folk." Its judicial and administrative forms were all those of the "folk" transferred within artificial boundaries, and the representative life of folk-moot and hundred-moot was thus preserved in the shire, with all its incalculable consequences in later English history.

The West-Saxon shires.

The shire, so far as we can see historically, is specially a West-Saxon institution. The first traces of it indeed may probably be found in the earliest ages of West-Saxon history. The original Wessex was, as we have seen, the region of the Gwent, and the earliest portion of West-Saxon conquest within that area was the region we call Hampshire. For this region we possess no earlier name, and in the name itself we find traces of a very early date, for Hampshire is but an abridged Hamtonshire, the district that found its centre in the tun that is now represented by our Southampton. Had the formation of

[1] That of Ealdhelm is styled "Selwoodshire." Æthelweard, a. 709. On the other hand, we may note that Bæda knows only of "dioceses" in Wessex, as he knows only "regiones" in Mercia.

CHAP. V.

The House of Alfred.

901-937.

this district taken place after the revival of Winchester and the settlement of the West-Saxon kings and bishops there in the time of Cenwalch,[1] the district would naturally have taken such a name as Winchestershire, like our Leicestershire or Gloucestershire; but its name of Hamtonshire points necessarily to an earlier date than this, and one which cannot be later than the first half of the seventh century. The name however has more to tell us. A shire is necessarily a district "shorn" off from some neighbour district; and the artificial character of such a "shearing" between Hampshire and Wiltshire is shown in the absence of any distinctly marked local divisions in the bounds between the two shires, while a close connexion between the two districts is shown in the similarity of their naming. Not only does Hampshire draw its name from the "tun" of the first Gewissas at Hamton, but the "t" in our Wiltshire shows that the word is only a contracted form of Wiltonshire, or the shire that found its "tun" in our Wilton, the settlement made by the Gewissas in the valley of the little Wil or Wiley. It is possible that each tun may have been a gathering-place of its shire-folk for moots and sacrifices; but however this may have been, we cannot fail to see in the relations of the two an indication, not only of the very early existence of the shire institution amongst the West-Saxons, but of the formation of the shire in its earliest shape round a central "tun."

Extension of the shire.

The West-Saxon origin of the "shire" is confirmed by the fact that its name first occurs in the laws of

[1] Cenwalch reigned from 643 to 672 (A.S.G.).

the West-Saxon Ine.[1] The shire already has its shire-man or shire-reeve, whose primary business must have been the collection of the royal farms and dues from each district, but who in assessing these, and deciding on claims of exemption and the like, must from the first have tended to become the judicial officer we find him under Ælfred, and to take his place in the shire-moot in that capacity beside bishop and ealdorman. It is possible however that in Ine's day this shire organization did not extend beyond the area of the Gwent, with perhaps its dependency of the present Berkshire. Wessex indeed was already spreading beyond its older bounds; besides Sussex or Surrey, or the districts across the Thames, the West-Saxons to the east of Selwood saw a new Wessex to the west of that forest in the regions of the Dorsætan and of the Somersætan. Their conquests however in this quarter were far from being completed in the reign of Ine; the conquest, in fact, of the south-west dragged on until the reign of Ecgberht, and it is likely enough that amidst the troubles of the kingdom during this period, the organization of the loosely compacted folks of "sætan" or settlers that spread over its various regions did not receive any definite form till that time. From Ecgberht's day, however, we have grounds for believing that the whole of the West-Saxon kingdom was definitely ordered in separate "pagi," each with an ealdorman at its head, and these "pagi" can hardly have been other than shires.[2] In

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 107.

[2] In the course of the Danish descents at this time the Chronicle mentions ealdormen of Hamton-shire, of the Wilsætan,

MERC... ...ARY
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CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

the names of the bulk of them however we note a striking difference from the names of the two earlier shires. The district no longer draws its name from the central "tun." In the case of Somerset indeed, such a tun seems to have existed at Somerton, but it does not give its name to the shire. The Somersætan like the Dorsætan had perhaps never arrived at even the rude unity which in the Wilsætan is seen raising their central township to an importance that enabled it to supersede their name, and to give its own name to the district; while farther west the settlement was so sparse that even the settlers failed to print their name exclusively on the land, and it retained its old Welsh title of Devon or Dyvnaint side by side with Defnsætan.

The shire in Mercia.

In the eastern dominion of the West-Saxon kings the new institution adapted itself equally to the older kingdoms. Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, became shires equally with the "sætan" of the west, though the retention of their older names showed the strength of their national tradition.[1] That the shire had spread over them by Æthelstan's time we may gather from the tenor of his laws, which speak of the shire as the settled political and judicial division throughout Wessex at large.[2] It is more doubtful when it spread

of Surrey, and of Berkshire, to the east of Selwood; of Dorset, Somerset, and Devon, to the west of it. Asser mentions "Wilton-scire" in 878. He speaks of Chippenham "quæ est sita in sinistrali parte Wiltun-scire" (ed. Wise), p. 30. In his translation of Orosius Ælfred speaks of Halgoland as a "scyr."

[1] Kent however is "Kent-shire" in the record of its folk-moot under Æthelstan. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 216.

[2] Æthelstan's laws, as I have before pointed out, only concern

over Mid-Britain. Into English Mercia it can hardly have been introduced before the annexation of that district by Eadward in 919;[1] and as the few remaining years of that king are spent in warfare, it probably dates from the days of Æthelstan. The Mercian kingdom, as its bishops' sees show, had been arranged in five distinct regions,—the land of the Lindiswaras, that of the Hwiccas, the original Mercia with its dependencies and its royal city at Tamworth, the land of the Middle-Engle about Leicester, and the land of the South-Engle with its see at Dorchester. None of these bore the name of shires; and in the earliest shire-organization their existence is only partially recognized. The land of the Lindiswaras indeed became Lincolnshire, that of the Middle-Engle may be equivalent to Leicestershire; but the other divisions are broken into smaller districts. Thus in the new ordering of English Mercia the land of the Hwiccas was broken into the shires of Gloucester and Worcester, while that of the Hecanas became Herefordshire; the clearings of the Hwiccas

Wessex, but they concern all Wessex, as their reception in Kentish and Surrey witenagemots proves. The "shire" is always referred to as an old and settled thing. At Thunresfeld, probably in Surrey, the witan pledged themselves "that each reeve should take the wed in his own shire." (Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 241.) The London gild-brothers trace a track "from one shire to another." (Ib. 237.) "Let forfang everywhere, be it in one shire, be it in more, be fifteen pence." (Ib. 225.)

[1] I cannot agree with the suggestion that Ælfred may have formed the shires of English Mercia. In that case the bounds of the Mercian shires would correspond with the then bounds of the Danelaw. This they do not do; which makes a date after the conquest of the Danelaw pretty certain.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

in the south of Arden were formed into a shire about Æthelflæd's new fortress of Warwick, as the dependent districts of the original Mercia along the Dee were made a shire for the fortress of Chester, and the lands of the old South-Mercians at the head waters of the Trent a shire for the fortress of Stafford. All these districts drew their names, like the earlier West-Saxon shires, from their central "town," save Shropshire, among whose "scrob," or bush, no local centre may as yet have grown into life.

The shire in the Danelaw.

This connexion of the shire with its town centre would necessarily be strengthened when Æthelstan or his successors extended the shire system over Guthrum's kingdom or the Five Boroughs; for, as we have seen, the Danes with their jarls and holds had for the most part clustered in the towns and ruled from thence the districts about them. The historic continuity of these districts indeed remained for the most part unbroken. The land of the Lindiswaras became Lincolnshire; Nottinghamshire may represent a people of the North-Engle, as Derbyshire the northern, and Staffordshire the southern divisions of the original Mercians; Leicestershire included the land of the old Middle-Engle, as Northamptonshire, it may be, that of the South-Engle; while North-Gyrwa and South-Gyrwa land reappeared as Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire. But here as in the rest of Mid-Britain the shire-names are wholly different in character from those to the south of the Thames. The two "folks" of East-Anglia alone recall the folk-districts and ancient kingdoms of southern Britain; Gainas and Hwiccas, Hecanas

and Magesætas, Middle-Engle and South-Engle, the very name of Mercia itself, alike disappeared from local nomenclature. What however distinguishes this district from the rest of Mid-Britain is that here we find a trace of purely artificial divisions. When Eadward in 912 annexed London and Oxford, each town already had "lands which owed obedience thereto,"[1] lands which could hardly have been other in extent than the present Middlesex and Oxfordshire, though the phrase itself is fair evidence that they had not as yet been brought within the shire system. Middlesex, as we have seen, owed its being to the severance of London from the rest of Essex; and in the "lands" about Oxford we may possibly see the district won at a time when it served as a frontier town against Guthrum's realm. Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire are other instances of purely military creation, districts assigned to the fortresses which Eadward raised at these points.[2]

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 912.

[2] "The arrangement of the whole kingdom in shires is of course a work which could not be completed until it was permanently united under Eadgar; and the existing subdivisions of southern England are all traceable back to his day at the latest" (Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 129). In East-Anglia the shire-system may have been of late introduction. Indeed it can hardly have been definitely settled before the Norman Conquest, as its divisions seem to have been often regarded as a single shire up to that time, and the retention of the tribal nomenclature in Norfolk and Suffolk instead of names drawn from its town centres implies that the "shire" had won a weaker hold than elsewhere. The northern shires are of yet later date, we only hear of "Yorkshire" on the verge of the Conquest. "Durham

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

The shire-reeve.

In one important point the organization of the West-Saxon shires does not seem to have been fully carried out in those of the rest of Britain. In Wessex each shire had its ealdorman, the representative no doubt of its old local independence, and the head of its armed force. In Midland Britain, where ealdormen had been accustomed to rule over wider regions than those of the shires, it was perhaps impossible to identify ealdormanries with each shire, and we find groups of shires falling under the rule of the same great officer.[1] But the shire-man or the shire-reeve was present in all; and his presence gives us the clue to the real grounds of the shire system.[2] Though its main issues were political, and though its yet more immediate issues probably involved the first great national reconstruction of our judicial system, there can be little doubt that its original aim was strictly financial.[3] The king's reeve, like the reeve of any one else, was simply the agent through whom the king received whatever was owing to him, whether the customs of a port, or the dues of his thegns, or the customary "firm" and services of a town

is the county palatine of the Conqueror's minister, formed out of the patrimony of St. Cuthbert. Lancashire was formed in the twelfth century by joining the Mercian lands between Ribble and Mersey with the northern hundreds, which in Doomsday were reckoned to the West Riding of Yorkshire. Cumberland is the English share of the old Cumbrian or Strath-Clyde kingdom; Northumberland and Westmoreland are the remnants of Northumbria and the Cumbrian frontier." (Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 129.)

[1] Stubbs, i. 131.

[2] For shire-reeve, see Kemble, "Sax. in Eng." ii. 157 et seq.

[3] See Cod. Dip. 1323.

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CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred. 901-937.

to attend;[1] and the result of this is seen in the way in which the shire-moot soon became known simply as the sheriff's court. It is difficult to fix the position of the early shire-reeve, or to trace the steps by which he rose to be a great executive officer, while he absorbed the judicial authority of bishop and earl.[2] But from the very nature of the case it is clear that the process must have been continually going on, and that with the very close relation of finance to government in those early times, the presence of the royal reeve in a shire, and his regular presidency of its court, must from the first have brought home to a Mercian or an East-Anglian the sense of a national king in a more personal and continuous way than any other agency.

Æthelstan's style.

As the years passed in this work of peaceful organization, and the realm remained unstirred about him, we can hardly wonder that the king looked on himself more and more as "lord of Britain." At his accession he had adopted the style of his predecessor as "King of the Angul-Saxons";[3] but once master of Northumbria the consciousness of a larger

[1] It was, in fact, the shire-reeve and not the ealdorman who was the constituting officer of the shire-moot. Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 134.

[2] Æthelstan's laws imply in the reeves a duty of putting royal enactments in force, as in the provisions of the synod of Greatanlea: and by Æthelred's day this executive character was clearly recognized. "If there be any man who is untrue to all the people, let the king's reeve go and bring him under surety," etc. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 283.

[3] A grant of 926 says "Angul-Saxonum rex." Cod. Dip. 1099.

rule blends oddly with the effort to find a common name for the lands beneath his sway. In 927 he calls himself "Monarch of all Britain;"[1] two years later, in 929, he is administering "the kingdom of all Albion;"[2] then, after two more years of fluctuation between these titles, we find him in 933 viewing himself in a more literal way as "King of the English-folk and of all the nations dwelling with them on every side."[3] But in the next year this sobriety of tone is set aside for styles of a more high-flown sort, and Æthelstan announces himself not only as "King of the Angul-Saxons and of all Britain," but as "Angul-Saxon King and Brytenwealda of all these islands,"[4] and by a yet higher reach of language as "Basileus of the English and at the same time Emperor of the kings and nations dwelling within the bounds of Britain."[5]

What the worth of such claims really was we see

[1] Cod. Dip. 1100. [2] Cod. Dip. 347.

[3] "Angligenarum omniumque gentium undique secus habitantium rex." Cod. Dip. 1109. In one shape or other this form of the royal style seems to have clung to the English chancery through several reigns. Its real meaning we shall see in Eadred's day.

[4] His subscription to the Latin charter, "Angul-Saxonum necnon et totius Britanniæ rex," is rendered in the English copy, "Ongol-Saxna cyning and brytenwealda ealles thyses iglandæs." Cod. Dip. 1110. The word "brytenwealda" occurs here for the first time; I find no other instance of it in this reign. It is probably borrowed from the entry in the Chronicle which we have before noticed ("Making of England," p. 306, et seq.), and in spite of the ingenious arguments built on it, seems to me merely an instance of the literary archaism and affectation of the time.

[5] Cod. Dip. 349.

CHAP. V.

The House of Alfred.

901-937.

Æthelstan's diplomacy.

from the fact that at the moment he used them the pompous fabric of his "Empire" was crumbling at Æthelstan's feet. Northumbria had risen,[1] and with its rising had begun a struggle which was to tax the energies of the West-Saxon kings for thirty years to come, and to end in the virtual disintegration of the English state. In some measure the strife was a result of Æthelstan's own diplomacy. He saw that his holding of the English Danelaw was not merely dependent on himself and the English Danes. The settlement of the northmen across Watling Street was flanked by like settlements in Ireland and in Gaul; and no lasting peace could be secured with Northern Britain which did not provide against the revival of the struggle by aid from either quarter. The Danes of Deira were closely linked with those of Dublin and Waterford; their kings were drawn in fact from the same stock, and were often only driven from the one realm to be owned as rulers in the other.[2] Thus Sihtric had been king of Dublin; and when driven out thence in 920 became king at York. His son Olaf and his brother Guthferth had sailed for Dublin on Æthelstan's annexation of Deira. From the actual incidents of the later struggle the danger seems in fact mainly to have come from this quarter; but though Eadward's work in the Ribble country may have been directed to providing against

[1] The imperial style is used in a grant to the Church of Worcester, by which Æthelstan hopes to win the favour of the saints in his war with "Anolafa rege Norrannorum, qui me vita et regno privare disponit." Cod. Dip. 349.

[2] Skene, "Celtic Scot." i. 351.

descents from Ireland, we know nothing of the policy which was pursued by the English kings in this quarter, and it is clear that the danger from the northmen in Ireland occupied Æthelstan's mind far less than the danger from the northmen in Gaul.

Hrolf's settlement in Gaul.

In Gaul the work of the pirates had long been shrinking within narrower bounds. They had withdrawn from the Garonne. They were now little heard of in the Loire. But the movement of defeat was also a movement of concentration; and their attacks fell more heavily than before on the valley of the Seine. Ever since the peace of Wedmore the Seine valley had been the field of the northman Hrolf, or as later story called him, Rollo, a friend of Guthrum of East-Anglia, and who drew, no doubt, much of his strength from the English Danelaw. His work had already produced weighty results on the aspect of French politics; for it is to Hrolf's forays along the Seine that France owes her capital and the line of her kings. Paris rose into greatness as the guard of the Seine valley against his attacks, and with it rose the line of Robert the Strong, a warrior to whom the land round Paris as far as the sea had been granted as a border-land against the northmen. The defence of Paris by Robert's son Odo in 885 raised his house into rivalry even with the descendants of Charles the Great; and, in the confusion which followed on the death of the successor of Lewis and Carloman, Odo became King of the Western Franks. But his throne was disputed by a Karolingian claimant, Charles the Simple; and a strife for the crown which opened between the king at Paris and this rival king at

CHAP. V.

The House of Alfred.

901-937.

Laon hindered the first from doing his work against the pirates of the Seine. Beaten off again and again, Hrolf with northern stubbornness still made his way back to Rouen, and in 912 his obstinacy found its reward, for in the treaty of Clair-on-Epte Charles the Simple granted to the northmen the coast at the mouth of the Seine from the sea to the Epte.

Its results.

No event of the time can compare in importance with the settlement of Hrolf and his comrades in their new "Northman's land." In France its effects were felt at once. What mainly brought about the treaty was no doubt the rivalry between the Karolingian house and the house of Robert the Strong. Charles in fact sought to weaken the duchy of Paris by carving Hrolf's country out of it, and by cutting off his rivals from the sea. But the settlement not only weakened his rivals, it strengthened Charles himself. The dread that the Parisian dukes would strive to win back again the best part of their duchy bound the Normans to the cause of the Karolingian kings; and that the house of Charles the Great still kept a hold on Western Frankland for more than seventy years was due mainly to the help it drew from the Normans of the Seine. But all thought of the effects which Hrolf's settlement produced on the fortunes of France is lost for Englishmen in the thought of its effect on the fortunes of England. From the hour when the northmen settled at the mouth of Seine, the story of the country which then became Normandy interweaves itself with the story of the English people. As we pass nowadays through the northman's land it is English history which is round about us. The names

of hamlet after hamlet have memories for English ears; a fragment of castle wall marks the home of the Bruce; a tiny village preserves the name of the Percy; while English religion and English literature look back with a filial reverence to the valley buried deep in its forest of ash-woods, through which wanders the rivulet of "Bec-Herlouin." In the huge cathedrals that lift themselves over the red-tiled roofs of Norman market towns we recognize the models of those mightier fabrics which displaced the lowly churches of early England. On the windy heights that look over orchard and meadow-land rise the square grey keeps which Normandy gave to the cliffs of Richmond and the banks of the Thames. One thought is with us as we pass from Avranches to the Bresle, and this thought, the thought of England's conquest by the Norman, becomes a living thing as we stand within the minster which the Conqueror raised at Caen.

The growth of Normandy.

But long before William's day the fortunes of the one people had told on those of the other. From the first hour of the Norman settlement in the valley of the Seine the history of Normandy linked itself closely with that of England, for the rise of a Danelaw across the Channel gave a new force to the Danelaw in Britain.[1] Whatever hopes of preserving

[1] According to all the Norse sources Gönguhrolf, or Hrolf, was of Norse blood, though in Norman and French accounts Dudo and his successors, who called him Rollo, make him a Danish prince. But though the accounts that make Hrolf a Norwegian are probably right, Steenstrup holds, and Maurer on this point agrees with him, that the overwhelming majority of the host that followed him into Normandy were of Danish descent. See

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

peaceful relations with the northmen over Watling Street may have been cherished by the house of Ælfred passed away with the settlement of their brethren in this new northman's land.[1] As help from the Danelaw had created Normandy, so help from Normandy was likely to give a new strength to the Danelaw; and the part which the Irish Ostmen had played till now in succouring and re-arousing the English pirates would probably from this time be played by the followers of Hrolf. The danger grew with the rapid growth of the new settlement. Hrolf was a statesman as well as a warrior; and throughout the reign of Eadward he was building up a state by policy as well as by arms. It was with a statesman's instinct that he clung to the king who had given him the northman's land. It was Hrolf's sword that supported Charles the Simple against his enemies, against Odo's son, Duke Robert of Paris, and against Robert's son, Hugh the Great. Amidst all the king's misfortunes the Norman leader stood firm to the Karolingian cause; it was as a loyal subject that he carried his raids over the Parisian duchy and penetrated even to Burgundy, till his energy and fidelity were rewarded by the addition of the Bessin, the district about Bayeux, to the northman's land.

William Longsword.

In extent therefore as in warlike fame the power of the Normans had almost doubled at the opening of Æthelstan's reign; and while the stern hand of their

K. Maurer's review of Steenstrup in the "Jenäer Literaturzeitung," 4th series, No. 2, Jan. 13, 1877, p. 25. (A. S. G.)

[1] For Hrolf's help to Guthrum against Ælfred, see Lappenberg, ii. 71, 72.

leader had fashioned his pirates into a people, whose numbers no doubt grew with an influx of northmen from the English Danelaw as it passed under West-Saxon sway, his political ability was shown in the ease with which the settlement was completed and the peace that he made throughout the land. Nor were the power and ability of his son, William Longsword, less than those of Hrolf himself. William's attitude in the strife between king and duke was that of his father; while within he carried on with even greater vigour the conversion and civilization of his people. But of this civilization of the Normans, this instinctive drawing closer to the Christendom about them which was to be the key-note of their history, the France and the England of the day knew nothing. They saw simply a settlement in the heart of Western Christendom of men who had for a hundred years past been slaughtering and ravaging over Christian lands. The French spoke of them for years to come as "pirates," and called their chieftain "the Pirates' Duke." England naturally looked on them as a political danger of the gravest sort. The growing extension of their territory along the coast fronted her southern shore with a Danelaw more powerful than the Danelaw she had struck down; a Danelaw which threatened the hold of England on the Channel, and cut off its communications with the rest of Christendom. Powerful too as Hrolf's duchy was in itself, it was yet more formidable as giving a new centre to the energy of the northmen. Beneath all the wild talk of the earliest Norman chroniclers we see that Normandy became from the first the

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

centre of the pirates' life. If the boast that English and Irish obeyed the commands of William Longsword or the dukes that followed him may be safely set aside, it points to a real influence which the dukes wielded over the body of the Danes in England as in Ireland. It was this unity of life and action among the northmen which made Normandy so formidable a foe. Every pirate settlement was in a state of constant ebb and flow. The northman who fought to-day on the Liffey might settle to-morrow on the Trent, while a year after he might be ravaging along the Seine or the Rhine. That Hrolf's men were tilling their lands in the Bessin or the Pays de Caux gave no surety that when harvest was gathered in, their boats might not be swarming in the Humber or the Colne. And with help such as this the work of the house of Ælfred might be undone in an hour; for, conquered as it was, the Danelaw waited only for the call of Norman or Ostman to rise against its conquerors.

English alliances.

From the moment of their settlement, therefore, at the mouth of the Seine the eyes of the English kings had been fixed anxiously on the Normans; and the result of their anxiety had already been seen in the birth of a foreign policy. It was dread of the Normans which first drew England into connexion with lands beyond the sea. Northward, eastward, and southward, the Norman pressure was felt by the states which girt in the new duchy, by Flanders and Vermandois, as by the great French dukedom and the wilder Bretons. All had in turn felt the Norman sword; all dreaded, even more than England itself,

attack from Normandy; and all sought to strengthen themselves against it by bonds of kinship and diplomacy. While facing the Danes at home, the English kings had sought to guard themselves against attack from abroad by joining in this movement of union. The marriage of Ælfred's daughter, Ælfthryth, with Count Baldwin of Flanders was the first instance of a system of marriage alliances which the English kings directed from this moment against the common foe; and the same purpose may be seen in the marriage of Eadward's daughter Eadgifu with the Frankish king Charles the Simple.[1]

Æthelstan's early policy.

Æthelstan not only adopted his father's policy, but carried it out on a far wider scale. He had hardly mounted the throne when he wedded one of his sisters, Eadgyth, to Otto, the son of the German king Henry;[2] and two years later a fresh political marriage linked him to a power nearer home. The second marriage followed on a change which passed at this moment over French politics. Whatever hopes of aid against the Normans Æthelstan may have drawn from his sister's marriage with Charles, were foiled by the claim to the Frankish crown which was now made by Rudolf of Burgundy, a brother-in-law of Duke Hugh of Paris; for this fresh attack of the Parisian house necessarily threw Charles back on his old policy of seeking aid from the pirates at Rouen. The English king therefore turned at once to the house which this new phase of politics marked out as

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 197.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 924. "Offæ Eald Seaxna cynges suna." But see for date Lappenberg, "Hist. Ang. Sax." ii. 134.

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CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

the pirates' foe, and in 926 a marriage was arranged through the intervention of the Count of Boulogne, the son of Baldwin of Flanders and the English Ælfthryth, between Æthelstan's sister Eadhild and Hugh the Great.[1] The splendid embassy with which the Duke of Paris sought Eadhild's hand shows the political importance of the match; and its weight may have told on the renewal of the struggle between Rudolf and Charles which followed it. But it told more directly on the strength of England by absorbing the forces of William Longsword in the years during which Æthelstan was annexing the Danelaw over the Humber, and turning into a practical sovereignty his supremacy over the Welsh.

Æthelstan and William Longsword.

Abroad therefore Æthelstan's schemes seemed as successful as at home. His French confederates not only held their own against the Karolingian king, but gave full occupation to the Norman duke. In 929 indeed the death of Charles the Simple left William Longsword alone in the face of his foes. Rudolf was now the unquestioned master of France; and in the following year his victory over the northmen of the Loire was a signal for a combined attack on the Normans of the Seine. While Hugh the Great pressed them from the south, the Bretons, over whom Hrolf and his son had asserted vague claims of supremacy, and from whom they had wrested the Bessin, put the Norman colonies in the newly won land to the sword and attacked Bayeux. But the hopes of Æthelstan were foiled by the vigour of William Longsword. Not only were the

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 216, 217.

Bretons swept back from the Bessin, but their land of the Cotentin, the great peninsula that juts into the British Channel, became Norman ground, while their leader, Alan, fled over sea to the English court.[1] The choice of his refuge points to the quarter from whence this attack on Normandy had probably come. If direct attack however had broken down, Æthelstan was more fortunate in the skill with which he wove a web of alliances round the Norman land. Flanders was already knit to the new England through Count Arnulf, a grandson of Ælfred like Æthelstan himself. The Count of Vermandois was on close terms with the English king. The friendship of the Parisian duchy came with the marriage of Duke Hugh; while Brittany was still at the king's service, and Æthelstan could despatch Alan again to carry fresh forays over the Norman border. Already troubled with strife within his own country, William Longsword saw a ring of foes close round him and threaten a renewal of the struggle for life. But the quickness and versatility of the duke were seen in the change of front with which he met this danger. The claims of the Karolingian house on his fidelity had ceased with the death of Charles the Simple; no Karoling claimant for the throne appeared, and William was able without breach of faith to sell his adhesion to Rudolf of Burgundy. By doing homage to Rudolf in 933 he not only won peace with the Parisian dukes, but a formal cession of his new conquests in the Cotentin;

[1] Alan was Eadward's ward, and had come in 931 from the English court. See Lappenberg, ii. 138 with the note, and p. 107 with note.

CHAP. V.

The House of Ælfred.

901-937.

The revolt of Northumbria.

and the dissolution of the league left him free to deal with Æthelstan.

A descent of the Ostmen from Ireland on the shores of Northumbria warned the English king of William's power to vex the land, and while it woke fresh dreams of revolt in the Danelaw encouraged the Scot king, Constantine, to weave anew the threads of the older confederacy against the English king.[1] In 934,[2] though the presence of the northern primate and some of the Danish Jarls at his court show that Northumbria still remained true to him,[3] the growing disturbance forced Æthelstan to march with an army into the north,[4] and to send a fleet to harry the Scottish coast. But its ravages, if they forced Constantine to a fresh submission, failed to check his intrigues, or to hinder him from leaguing with Eadred of Bernicia and the Irish Ostmen to stir up a fresh rising of the Danelaw. With the Ostmen Constantine was closely connected through their leader, Anlaf or Olaf, a son of the Northumbrian king, Sihtric, who had found refuge at the Scottish

[1] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 352.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 934; (Winch.), a. 933.

[3] The grant to Worcester just before his march against "Anolafa rege Norrannorum qui me vitâ et regno privare disponit" (Cod. Dip. 349) is attested by "Rodewoldus archiepiscopus" (a blunder for Wulfstan), and "Healden dux." Wulfstan is again present in a witenagemot at Frome at the close of the year, on the king's return from the north, December 934, but no northern names appear among the duces. Cod. Dip. 1110.

[4] Sim. Durh. "Hist. Dunelm. Ecc." lib. ii. c. 18 (Twysden, p. 25). "Fugato deinde Oswino rege Cumbrorum et Constantino rege Scottorum terrestri et navali exercitu Scotiam sibi subjugando perdomuit."

court on his father's death, and on Æthelstan's annexation of his realm. Constantine had first shown the change which had taken place in his political sympathies by giving Olaf his daughter to wife;[1] and after the earlier failure of their plans Olaf had sailed to Ireland, and, placing himself at the head of the Ostmen, again lent himself to the plots of the Scottish king. The influence of Olaf was seen in the withdrawal of the northern Jarls from the English court within a year or two after the campaign of 934,[2] and when in 937 he appeared with a fleet off the Northumbrian coast the whole league at once rose in arms. The men of the northern Danelaw found themselves backed not only by their brethren from Ireland but by the mass of states around them, by the English of Bernicia, by the Scots under Constantine, by the Welshmen of Cumbria or Strath-Clyde. It is the steady recurrence of these confederacies which makes the struggle so significant. The old distinctions and antipathies of race must have already in great part passed away before peoples so diverse could have been gathered into one host by a common dread of subjection, and the motley character of the army pointed forward to that fusion of both northman and Briton in the general body of the English race which was to be the work of the coming years.

Brunanburh.

At the news of this rising Æthelstan again marched into the north. He met his enemies on the unknown

[1] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 352.

[2] We find no Danish names among the attesting duces throughout the rest of Æthelstan's reign.

CHAP. V.

The House of Alfred.

901-937.

field of Brunanburh,[1] and one of the noblest of English war-songs has preserved the memory of the fight that went on from sunrise to sunset. The stubbornness of the combat proves that brave men fought on either side. The shield-wall of the northmen stood long against the swords of Æthelstan and his brother Eadmund; the Scots fought on till they were "weary with war." But the West-Saxons "in bands of chosen ones" hewed their way steadily through the masses of their foe, their Mercian fellow-warriors "refused not the hard hand-play," and at sunset the motley host broke in wild flight. "The Danes," shouts the exulting singer, "had no ground for laughter when they played on the field of slaughter with Eadward's children." Five of their kings and seven of their jarls lay amongst the countless dead. Olaf[2] only saved his life by hastily shoving out his boat to sea and steering for Dublin with the remnant of his men, while Constantine left

[1] The Winchester and other Chronicles insert under 937 the first of the four poems which treat of the annals of this period, the Song of Brunanburh. The only other detailed account of the strife is in the Egils Saga (in Johnstone, "Antiq. Celto-Scandicæ," p. 42, &c.); but the Saga is of too late a date and too romantic a character to be used as an historical authority. The site of Brunanburh is still undetermined. Mr. Skene ("Celtic Scotland," i. 357) would fix it at Aldborough; but Mr. Freeman and Professor Stubbs abandon the effort to localize it in despair. The "Brunanburh" of the song becomes in the saga "Vinheidi," and in Simeon of Durham ("Gest. Reg." and "Hist. Dunelm.") "Wendune" and "Weondune." Flor. of Worcester places it by the mouth of the Humber.

[2] Skene distinguishes this Olaf of Dublin from Olaf, Sihtric's son, who seems to have returned to Scotland with Constantine ("Celtic Scotland," i. 357).

his son covered with death-wounds in the midst of his slaughtered war-band. The old king's faithlessness had stirred a special hatred in the conquerors. "There fled he—wise as he was—to his northern land! No cause had he, the hoary fighting man, for gladness in that fellowship of swords! no cause had he, the grey-haired lord, the old deceiver, for boastfulness in the bill-crashing."[1]

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 937.

CHAPTER VI.

WESSEX AND THE DANELAW.

937—955.

The severance of the north.

FROM the battle-field of Brunanburh, where "dun kite and swart raven and greedy war-hawk" were sharing the corpses with the "grey wolf of the wood," Æthelstan turned with a glory such as no English king had won. The fight, sang his court-singer,[1] was a fight such as had never been seen by Englishmen, "since from the east Engle and Saxon sought Britain over the broad sea." A hundred years later indeed men still called it "the great fight."[2] Nor was the victory a doubtful one. "The two brothers, king and ætheling, sought their own land, the land of the West-Saxons, exulting in the war." But victory as it was, Brunanburh marks the beginning of a great defeat. The national union which had been conceived by Ælfred and partially carried out by Eadward and Æthelstan, could only be embodied in the king himself; it was only by a common obedience to one who was at once King of the West-Saxons, King of the Mercians, King of the Northumbrians, and Lord of

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 937. [2] Æthelweard, lib. iv. c. 5.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

the Jarls of Mid-Britain, that West-Saxon, Mercian, Northumbrian, and Dane, could forget their distinctions of locality and race, and blend in a common England. Such a threefold kingship and lordship of the Dane Æthelstan had won in his earliest years of rule; and the years of peace which had passed since the submission of Northumbria seemed the beginning of a time of national union. But with the rising under Olaf the prospect of union vanished like a dream. Vanquished as it was, Northumbria was still strong enough to tear itself away from the king's personal grasp, and to force Æthelstan to restore its old under-kingship with the isolated life which that kingship embodied. The hard fighting of his successors, if it forced the north to own their supremacy, never succeeded in bringing it again within their personal sovereignty: the under-kingdom was indeed replaced later by an earldom, but the land remained almost as much apart from the kingdom at large under earl as under under-king; and on the very eve of the Norman conquest, no king's writ ran in the Northumbria of Siward.

The system of ealdormanries.

The severance of the north, in fact, was the first step in a process of reaction which was to undo much that the house of Ælfred had done. The growth of the monarchy, aided as it was by the strife against the Dane and by the personal energy of the kings themselves, had carried it beyond the actual bounds of English feeling. The national sentiment which the war had created, real as it was, was as yet too weak to set utterly aside the tradition of local independence, and to look solely to a national king. It had

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

carried the monarchy too beyond the actual possibilities of government. Government, as we have seen in Æthelstan's efforts to restore order in Wessex, rested from the very necessities of the time on the presence and personal action of the king. The administrative machinery by which later rulers, Norman or Angevin, brought the land within the grasp of a central power was still but in its beginning. Their great creation of a judicial machinery for the same purpose had as yet hardly an existence. The disorder which taxed the king's energies south of the Thames must have been even greater in the tract over which the war had rolled to the north of it; and his occasional visits to Mercia or the Danelaw could give little of the succour which Wessex felt from his presence within it. It was the weight of these political and administrative needs that was felt in the second decisive step towards the disintegration of the realm, the creation of the great ealdormanries. Ælfred indeed had led the way in this creation by his raising Æthelred into the ealdorman of English Mercia. But the danger of such a measure at once disclosed itself, for though Æthelred acted strictly as an officer of the king, summoning the witan by his licence, and seeking confirmation from him for judgement or grant, yet the tradition of local kingship and of individual life in the country itself raised him into a power which Eadward felt to be inconsistent with any union of the peoples round a common king. At Æthelred's death, therefore, he found no successor; and on the death of the Lady, his wife, Mercia was taken under the direct rule of the crown. The policy of Eadward was in his

earlier years the policy of Æthelstan himself. There was no restoration of the Mercian ealdorman, still less any indication of the extension of the system over other parts of the realm. With the shock of Brunanburh, however, and with the renewed isolation of northern Britain, such an extension seems to have become inevitable; and it was in the later years of Æthelstan, or in the short reign of Eadmund which followed, that we find the system of ealdormanries adopted as a necessary part of the organization of Britain.

Its limitations.

But though this revival of the old political divisions seemed the only form of organization open to the English kings, their subsequent measures show that they were not blind to its defects. If the earlier kingdoms were restored, the place of the king in each was taken by an ealdorman, who, however independent and powerful he might be, was still named by the West-Saxon sovereign and could be deposed by that ruler and the national witan, while his relation to the folk he governed was that of a stranger, and had none of the strength which the older kings had drawn from their position as representatives of the blood of their races. In the second place, these ealdormen were bound to the West-Saxon throne by their own royal West-Saxon blood.[1] As we have seen, the growth of Wessex had been simply an extension of the West-Saxon race, and as a result of this, its various divisions had been committed to the charge of ealdormen chosen from the one royal stock. Different as were the circumstances before

[1] Robertson, "Hist. Essays," "The King's Kin."

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

them, Æthelstan or Eadmund followed the tradition of their house in committing the states of Mid-Britain to ealdormen of their own blood. Such an arrangement seemed a security against their reviving the claims of the folks they ruled to their old national independence, and in this respect it was certainly successful, for from this time we hear of no attempt on the part of any of these states to break away from the common English realm. But on the other hand, as the history of Wessex itself in the past had shown, it brought with it another danger. These princes of the blood with the weight of their states behind them could bring heavy pressure to bear on the royal government. Their kinship drew them into close relations with the court, which soon became the scene of their struggle for supremacy and of their mutual rivalries, until the anarchy of early Wessex was reproduced in that of England under Æthelred the Second.

Creation of the eastern ealdormanries.

The aim of the crown in creating the first of these great ealdormanries, that of East-Anglia,[1] was probably to weaken the Danelaw by detaching from it all that was least Danish, and that could be thoroughly re-Anglicized as a portion of the English realm. The ealdordom was intrusted to Æthelstan, a noble of the royal kin,[2] and stretched far beyond East-Anglia

[1] The date of its creation is really uncertain; but Lappenberg, from the Hist. of Ramsey, assigns it to Æthelstan's reign.

[2] He "exchanged his patrimonial forty hides in his native province of Devon for the forty hides at Hatfield, which Eadgar gave to Ordmær and his wife."—Robertson, "Hist. Essays," p. 179. His father's name was Æthelred (Cod. Dip. 338), but this can hardly be the king of that name "who died eighty-five

itself to include the old country of the Gyrwas about the fens,[1] with perhaps Northamptonshire, and the district of Kesteven. Probably about the same time was created the ealdormanry of the East Saxons by the elevation of Ælfgar, the father of Eadmund's queen Æthelflæd at Domerham,[2] who was succeeded by Brihtnoth as husband of his daughter, Ælflæd. Essex[3] seems to have included, besides the shire of that name, those of Oxford and Buckingham, and also possibly that of Middlesex with London.[4] Taken together, the two ealdormanries formed in fact the kingdom of Guthrum in its largest extent, and as the East-Saxon ealdormen, whether from kinship or no, seem to have uniformly acted in union with those of

years before the name of Æthelstan is missed from the charters." He may have been his grandson. Æthelstan's name "is found in connexion with the charters of his great namesake." (Robertson, "Hist. Essays," 180, with note.)

[1] "The diocese of Dorchester, as it existed in the tenth century, though once a portion of the Mercian kingdom, was not included under the jurisdiction of the Mercian ealdorman. The shires of Bedford, Hertford, Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Northampton, with the district of Kesteven, seem to have belonged to the ealdordom of Æthelwine of East-Anglia; and as in the reign of Æthelred the reeves of Oxford and Buckingham were brought to task by Leofsige, ealdorman of Essex, the remainder of the diocese would appear to have been placed under the ealdorman of the East-Saxons." Robertson, "Hist. Essays," 181. The boundaries of the eastern ealdormanries however must be regarded as very uncertain.

[2] Ælfgar died about 951-3. Robertson, "Hist. Essays," p. 189. Eng. Chron. a. 946.

[3] See note, *ante*.

[4] This however is only an inference from facts in themselves uncertain.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-
955.

East-Anglia, Æthelstan became practically lord of all eastern Britain, and his nickname of the "Half-King" shows that he was soon recognized as a force almost equal to that of the crown.

Eric Bloody-Axe.

In the years that followed Brunanburh, however, even if any ealdormanry were as yet created, the results of its creation were unseen; and the care of Æthelstan was centred mainly in the north. As we have said, his victory was far from restoring his original rule. Though eight years had passed since he "took to the kingdom of the Northumbrians," the rising under Olaf showed that the attempt at a real union was premature, that the Danelaw over Humber could only still be governed through a subject king, and he a king of northern blood. Such a king however Æthelstan had ready to hand. His diplomacy had long been as busy in the north as in the south; and he seems to have aimed at finding aid against the Danes by seeking the friendship of the new power which had risen up among the northmen of Norway. Harald Fair-hair had died in a hoar old age on the eve of Brunanburh; and though his kingdom was disputed among his sons, Eric Bloody-Axe got mastery of most of it. Eric is one of the few figures who stand out distinct for us from the historic darkness which covers the north. "Stout and comely, strong and very manly, a great and lucky man of war, but evil-minded, gruff, unfriendly, and silent,"[1] he and his witch-wife, Gunhild, whom he had found, said the legend, in the hut of two Lapp sorcerers, embodied all the violence

[1] Harald Fair-hair's Saga; Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 313.

and guile that mingled with the nobler temper of the northmen. He was but a boy of twelve when his father gave him five long-ships, and his next four years were spent in Wiking cruises in the Baltic and the northern seas. "Then he sailed out into the West Sea, and plundered in Scotland, Bretland, Ireland, and Walland," our France, for four years more. A raid on the Finns ended these early cruises, and won him Gunhild; and, still on the brink of manhood, he came home to be welcomed by Harald Fair-hair as his successor on the throne of Norway. With his brothers who stood in his way he dealt roughly. Rognwald, who was charged with witchcraft, "he burned in a house along with eighty other warlocks, which work was much praised." Biorn, the merchant-king, he slew drinking at his board. But a younger brother, Hakon, still remained, and when Hakon at his father's death promised the bonders their old udal rights back again Norway broke out in revolt. "The news" that their rights were once more their own "flew like fire in dry grass through the whole land:"[1] all men streamed to Hakon; and Eric, left alone, had to give up the strife, and "sail out into the western seas with such as would follow him."

Eric set over Northumbria.

It was in the days after Brunanburh that Eric's plunder-raid brought him to the shores of Northumbria; and Æthelstan seized the chance of balancing the Danish element in Northumbria by the Norwegian element that was mingled with it.[2] A bargain was

[1] Hakon the Good's Saga; Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 315.

[2] In 924 the peoples in Northumbria who "bowed" to

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

927-
955.

soon struck by which Eric submitted to baptism with all his house, and received the kingdom of Northumbria at Æthelstan's hand on pledge to guard it against Danes or other Wikings.[1] Little as we know of the Danelaw, we see that the life he found there was a life as northern as that of his own northern lands, for "Northumbria," runs the Saga, "was mainly inhabited by northmen. Since Lodbrog's sons had taken the country, Danes and northmen often plundered there, when the power of the land was out of their hands. . . King Eric, too, had many people about him, for he kept many northmen who had come with him from the east, and also many of his friends joined him from Norway." In taking the land he had pledged himself to hold it "against Danes or other Wikings," and had received baptism, "together with his wife and children and all his people who had followed him." But pledge and Christianity sate as lightly on Eric as they sate on his fellow northmen in the Danelaw. If the Danes had settled down in farm and homestead, they were long before they ceased to vary their toil with the Wiking's plunder-raid; and Eric, throned as he was at York, was like his subjects a Wiking at heart. "As he had little lands, he went on a cruise every summer, and plundered in Shetland, the Hebrides, Iceland, and Bretland, by which he gathered goods."[2]

Eadward are separately named, "either English, or Danes, or northmen." Eng. Chron. a. 924.

[1] For Eric, see Sagas of Harald Fair-hair and of Hakon the Good; Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 301-306, 311-316. See also Saga of Egil Skallagrimson.

[2] Saga of Hakon the Good; Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 316-317.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

Lewis from over-sea.

Though Æthelstan's rule over the north had shrunk from a real sovereignty into a vague overlordship, it is notable that his efforts from this moment were aimed at other lands than the Danelaw. He still remained bent on the ruin of the power which was able to call the Danelaw to arms. Even in the midst of his struggle for life with the great confederacy of the north the king had been busy planning a more formidable attack than ever on the Normans. During his father's last misfortunes, Lewis, the child of Charles the Simple and of the king's sister Eadgifu, had found with his mother a refuge in England, and had grown up at his uncle's court. When Rudolf died, and Hugh of Paris, with a cautious policy which time was to reward, refused to grasp the crown, the hearts of the West-Franks turned to the young Karoling "over-sea," and at Hugh's instigation Lewis was chosen for their king. The envoys who were sent in 936 with the offer of the crown found Æthelstan in his camp at York, holding down the earlier disaffection of the Danelaw, but the king at once rode to the south; and an English embassy crossed the Channel to prepare for the return of Lewis to his father's throne. From the court of Duke Hugh they passed to the court of William Longsword on a visit memorable as the first instance of direct political communication between England and Normandy. We know little of the negotiations which ended in the duke's assent to the accession of the Karoling. William, no doubt, saw through the aim of Æthelstan in his nephew's elevation; but to refuse Lewis was to set a stronger and more formidable neighbour, Hugh

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

the Great, on the throne. Through the life too of Charles the Simple, the Normans had been the great support of the Karolingian house; and the duke may have believed that when once the crown was on his brow the old rivalry of the House of Paris would again throw the son of Charles, whatever were his uncle's plans, into the arms of the Normans. William at any rate wrung from Æthelstan a heavy price for his assent to his nephew's crowning. Brittany had been one of the king's readiest weapons against the Normans; and Alan with a train of Breton refugees was still at the English court. But peace was now arranged between Breton and Norman, and Alan, returning to his native land, pledged himself to keep peace with William Longsword.

Lewis and Æthelstan.

With what aims Æthelstan had set his nephew on the French throne, the action of Lewis was to show. The boy had sworn to follow the counsels of his nobles, and in the first days of his reign he submitted to the guidance of Duke Hugh. But the victory of Brunanburh soon followed his return, and Æthelstan was now free to give his whole support to his nephew's cause. The certainty of English aid at once gave a new energy to the young king's action. He broke utterly from his father's policy. Instead of relying on the Normans against the pressure of the House of Paris, he stood aloof from both these powers. He declared himself independent of Hugh, and summoned from England his English mother to give into her charge his royal city of Laon. The hand of the English king was seen in the political combinations that followed this step.

Between the lands of Æthelstan's cousin Arnulf of Flanders and the Norman duchy lay the county of Ponthieu, then probably, as at a later time, an outpost of the Norman power. In 939 Count Herlwin of Ponthieu was attacked by Arnulf, his city of Montreuil taken, and his wife and children who were found in it sent as prisoners to Æthelstan "to be kept in hold over sea." The attack was possibly made with the aid of an English fleet which we shall soon see busy in the Channel; and that it was really aimed at the Normans we gather from the action of their duke, for William Longsword at once marched on Montreuil, recovered the town, and ravaged Arnulf's borders. The war with Arnulf, however, threatened to widen into the larger contest which Æthelstan had no doubt designed. Lewis drew towards the foes of the Normans; his bishops excommunicated William Longsword; and their sentence seemed the prelude for a joint attack of the two kings and the count on the northmen in France.

Failure of their league.

But at the moment of their execution the combinations of the English king were again frustrated by a turn in Frankish politics. The old loyalty of Lorraine to the House of Charles the Great revived at the sight of a Karolingian sovereign at Laon. On the coronation of Otto as king of the East-Franks at Aachen, Lorraine threw off the German rule; and though Lewis rejected the first offer of its allegiance, he yielded to a second. The war with Otto which naturally followed drew all the efforts of the Frankish king from Normandy to his eastern borderland, where

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

for a time Lorraine passed into the hands of Lewis. But his winning of it caused a sudden change in the position of the young king in Frankland itself. He had for three years stood aloof from the control of the Parisian duke, and now the addition of Lorraine to his realm threatened Hugh with a master too great for his power to check. Parisian duke and Norman duke, both equally threatened by the king, drew together against their common enemy at the moment when his force was spent by the contest for Lorraine; and their league was soon joined by a prince of almost equal strength. If Arnulf of Flanders dreaded the growth of Normandy, he dreaded yet more the growth of a royal power strong enough to curb the new states which were parting Western Frankland between them; and the winning of Lorraine by the young king drew him, like his fellows, into revolt. But though the ambition of Lewis had foiled the policy of Æthelstan, the king clung to his nephew's cause. When rumours of Arnulf's approaching defection and of the attack he was planning on Laon reached England, an English fleet with forces on board appeared off the coast of Boulogne. Its ravages however failed to turn Arnulf from his purpose; and on the news that in the face of these dangers Lewis was still fairly holding his own in Lorraine, it fell back to its English harbour.

Eadmund.

The recall of the fleet may have been due to the failing health of Æthelstan; for on the twenty-seventh of October, 940,[1] in the midst of these wide

[1] So the later Chronicles, probably from a lost annal in the Worcester copy. The Winchester Chronicle dates it 941.

projects, the king died at Gloucester; and the troubles which followed the succession of his brother Eadmund left little room for a display of energy across the sea. Though he had fought by Æthelstan's side at Brunanburh, Eadmund, a child of Eadward's third marriage with Eadgifu,[1] was a youth of eighteen when he mounted the throne. But he had already a policy of his own, and that a policy distinct from the system of Æthelstan.[2] "He was no friend to the northmen,"[3] or to the system of balances by which his brother had used the Norwegians of the Danelaw to hold down the Danes. Eric too was in no favour with him. As southern England became day by day a realm more peaceful and highly organized, the instincts of its statesmen must have revolted more and more from

[1] Æthelstan was the only son of Eadward's first marriage; both his sons by a second were dead; there remained two young sons by his third, Eadmund and Eadred.

[2] In Æthelstan's later years, after some more experiments, such as in 935, "basileus Anglorum et æque totius Britanniæ orbis curagulus" (Cod. Dip. 1111), or in 937, "rex Anglorum et æque totius Albionis gubernator" (Cod. Dip. 1114; it is notable that he never recurs to his "Imperator" and "Brytenwealda"), the royal style had at last settled down into a single form. From 938 at any rate it is almost uniformly "Basileus Anglorum cunctarumque gentium in circuitu persistentium," and the signature, "rex totius Britanniæ." (Cod. Dip., a series of charters from 1116 to 1123, &c.) Eadmund adopts and generally uses the same description, though breaking out here and there, as in 940, into "rex Anglorum et curagulus multarum gentium" (Cod. Dip. 384), or in 941, "regni Anglorum basileus" (he signs here, "totius Britanniæ rex;" Cod. Dip. 1139), or in 946, "rex Anglorum necnon et Merciorum" (Cod. Dip. 409), but signs almost uniformly "rex Anglorum."

[3] Hakon's Saga; Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 317.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937.
955.

the wild barbarism of the north, where Eric, with his false and cruel Gunhild beside him, remained in spite of his baptism the mere pirate he had landed. So "the word went about that King Eadmund would set another chief over Northumbria." The threat was enough for Eric, who set off on new cruises of piracy, only now adding the English coast to his former field of prey; and at his departure the Danelaw rose once more against the English king.

The rising of the Danelaw.

The revolt was even more formidable than that which Æthelstan had faced at Brunanburh, for the rapidity with which the English army met Olaf and Constantine on that bloody field seems to have prevented the general rising of the English Danelaw on which the Ostmen had reckoned. But with a boy-king on the throne the spell of terror which the great defeat had thrown over the north was broken; the Danes again called for aid from their kinsmen in Ireland; and on the reappearance of Olaf in the Humber in 941 the Danelaw took fire.[1] The rising was not merely a rising of the Danes north of Humber, for after twenty years of quiet submission to the English rule, even the men of the Five Boroughs now threw off their allegiance and joined their kinsmen in Northumbria in taking Olaf for king; and the danger was heightened by an unlooked-for defection from the royal cause. In his appointment of Wulf-

[1] The Winchester Chron. a. 942, gives here a fragment of a second poem on the deeds of Eadmund. As to Olaf, or Anlaf, Mr. Skene thinks this Olaf to be the King of Dublin, and that on his death soon after (Eng. Chron. Winch., a. 942) he was succeeded by the second Olaf, Sihtric's son, from Scotland. ("Celtic Scotland," i. 361.)

stan to the primacy at York in 934 Æthelstan had trusted to secure a firm support for his rule in the north. We have already noted the new and independent position which had been given to the see of York by its isolation from the rest of the English Church. Its occupant became in fact even more the religious centre of northern Britain than the primate of Canterbury was as yet of southern Britain; and as the pagan settlers yielded to Christian influences, he rose to still greater importance as the natural centre of union between Englishman and Dane. The quick revolutions in the northern kingship, as well as its occasional parting between two rulers, must have still further heightened the position of a spiritual head who remained unaffected by these changes; and in Archbishop Wulfstan the power of the primate rivalled the temporal authority of the northern kings. Till now Wulfstan's influence had been steadily exerted in support of the English sovereignty; though the names of the Danish Jarls are absent from Æthelstan's later witenagemots, Archbishop Wulfstan was still present at the English court; and in the opening of Eadmund's reign his attitude seems to have remained the same. He joined with his fellow primate to avert a conflict between the king and the Danes at Lincoln; and even in 942 we find him at Eadmund's court.[1] But whether he was swept away by the strength of local feeling or alienated by the king's West-Saxon policy, at this moment his course suddenly changed. Not only did he adopt the northern

[1] "Wulfstan archiepiscopus urbis Eboracæ metropolitanus" attests a royal grant in 942. (Cod. Dip. 392.)

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

Eadmund's defeat.

cause as his own, but in the after struggle he stood side by side with Olaf as commander of the northern host.

Not content with freeing Northumbria, the Ostmen and primate burst in 943 into Mid-Britain, and their storm of Tamworth and of Leicester gave them the valley of the Trent. Eadmund was strong enough to regain the last city, and Wulfstan and Olaf had some difficulty in escaping from his grasp, but the work of even Eadward was undone, and after two years of hard fighting, the primates of York and Canterbury negotiated a peace in which Olaf bowed to baptism and owned himself Eadmund's under-king, but which practically left Eadmund master only of the realm that Ælfred had ruled.[1] The revival of the English Danelaw was the more formidable that with it went a revival of the Norman power across the sea. The death of Æthelstan had been as disastrous to his nephew as to his son. It left Lewis friendless at a moment when the war on his eastern border turned suddenly against him, and he was driven by Otto from Lorraine. Pressed hard even in his own Frankland by Hugh the Great and Herbert of Vermandois, deserted by Arnulf of Flanders, the young king was thrown back on the policy of his father. He looked for aid to the Normans; and William Longsword was as ready to return to the policy of Hrolf as Lewis to that of Charles the Simple. Lewis was saved from ruin by Norman help; his fortunes were restored by the Norman sword; Norman diplomacy brought about a peace with Otto and a reconciliation with

[1] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 943.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937. 955.

Hugh. The power which Æthelstan had threatened with destruction stood forward as the leading power in West-Frankland; and the greatness of Normandy gave encouragement and it may be direct aid to the struggle of the Danelaw against Eadward's son.

Recovery of the Danelaw.

But if wider hopes of common action dawned on the northmen, they were foiled at this moment of triumph by the murder of the Norman duke; for the wild vigour which had been turned into fighting power by William Longsword crumbled into anarchy as soon as his grasp was loosed; and his son Richard, a child of ten years old, was hardly seated in the ducal chair in 943 when strife broke out between the Normans who drew towards he religion and civilization of the land in which they had settled, and those who still clung to the old worship and traditions of the north. Lewis, thankless for the aid which had saved him, swung back at once to his older purpose, and seized the opening which the strife gave him for carrying out those plans of conquest over the Normans which had been so fatally interrupted by his schemes on Lorraine. His success was complete, for marching upon Rouen under pretext of aiding the young duke against the pagan reaction, he became master of the whole of Normandy without a blow. The sudden turn of affairs in France may have told on the other side of the Channel; it was at any rate at this juncture, in 944, that Eadmund rallied to a new attack on the Danelaw; and it was while Normandy lay at the feet of Lewis that he succeeded in driving

MERCANTILE LIBRARY OF NEW YORK

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

Cumbria and Strath-Clyde.

out Olaf, Sihtric's son, and in again reducing it to submission.[1]

But the measures which followed its conquest showed that the young king possessed the political as well as the military ability of his house. What most hindered the complete reduction of the Danelaw was the hostility to the English rule of the states north of it, the hostility of Bernicia, of Strath-Clyde, and above all of the Scots. The confederacy against Æthelstan had been brought together by the intrigues of the Scot-king, Constantine; and though Constantine in despair at his defeat left the throne for a monastery, the policy of his son Malcolm was much the same as his father's.[2] Eadmund was no sooner master of the Danelaw than he dealt with this difficulty in the north. The English blood of the Bernicians was probably drawing them at last to the English monarch, for after Brunanburh we hear nothing of their hostility. But Cumbria was far more important than Bernicia, for it was through Cumbrian territory that the Ostmen could strike most easily across Britain into the Danelaw. The Cumbria, however, with which Eadmund dealt was far from being the old Cumbrian kingdom from the Eden to the Ribble, the southern part of which remained attached to the Northumbrian kingdom, even in the hands of the Danes, while the northern part, now known as Westmoringa-land,

[1] He drove out its two kings, Olaf, Sihtric's son, and Ragnald, son of Sihtric's brother, Guthferth. Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 944.

[2] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 360-361.

The land of the Western Moors.

the land of the men of the western moors, had been colonized by Norwegian settlers.[1]

Though a fragment of the Cumbrian kingdom which the sword of Ecgfrith had made[2] remained to the last in the hands of Northumbria, its bounds had been cut shorter and shorter. Under Eadberht the Northumbrian supremacy had reached as far as the district of Kyle in Ayrshire: and the capture of Alclwyd by his allies, the Picts, in 756, seemed to leave the rest of Strath-Clyde at his mercy. But from that moment the tide had turned; a great defeat shattered Eadberht's hopes; and in the anarchy which followed his reign district after district must have been torn from the weakened grasp of Northumbria, till the cessation of the line of her bishops at Whithern[3] tells that her frontier had been pushed back almost to Carlisle. But even after the land that remained to her had been in English possession for nearly a century and a half, it was still no English land. Its great landowners were of English blood,[4] and as the Church of Lindisfarne was richly endowed here, its priesthood was probably English too. But the conquered Cumbrians had been left by Ecgfrith on the soil, and in its local names we find few traces of any migration of the Engle over the moors from the east. There was little indeed to invite settlers save along

[1] In 966, "Thored, Gunner's son, harried Westmoringa-land," Eng. Chron., a. 966.

[2] Between 670-675. See "Making of England," p. 358. (A.S.G.)

[3] Badulf, the last bishop of Whithern of the Anglo-Saxon succession whose name is preserved, was consecrated in 791. Sim. Durh. ad. ann. (A. S. G.)

[4] Robertson, "Scotland under Early Kings," vol. ii. p. 434.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

the valleys of the Lune or the Ribble; elsewhere the huge and almost unbroken stretch of woodland and moorland and marsh which covered our Lancashire must have been almost as wild and unpeopled as the dales scattered among the "Western-Moors" where St. Hubert found a "desert" for his hermitage. Carlisle indeed had carried on an unbroken life from its Roman and Celtic days; but it is doubtful whether life had as yet returned to the "ceaster" on the Lune, our Lancaster; and it was not till the tenth century that Eadward could set up his fort amidst the ruins of Mancunium.

The Norwegian settlers.

The "parting," however, of Deira in 876 among Halfdene's warriors drove English fugitives for refuge into the desert land. One such we see in a certain Ælfred, who "came, fearing the pirates, over the western hills, and sought pity from S. Cuthbert and bishop Cutheard, praying that they should give him some lands."[1] But it was only to meet other assailants. Along the Irish Channel the boats of the Norwegian pirates were as thick as those of the Danish corsairs on the eastern coast; and the Isle of Man, which they had conquered and half colonized, served as a starting-point from which the marauders made their way to the opposite shores. Their settlements reach as far northward as Dumfriesshire, and southward perhaps to the little group of northern villages which we find in the Cheshire peninsula of the Wirral. But it is in the Lake district and in the north of our Lancashire that they lie thickest.[2] Ormside and

[1] Sim. Durh. "Hist. S. Cuthb." (Twysden), p. 74.

[2] "The Lake district seems to have been almost exclusively

Ambleside, Kettleside and Silverside, recall the "side" or settle of Orm and Hamel, of Ketyl and Soelvar, as Ulverston and Ennerdale tell of Olafr and Einar. Buthar survives in Buttermere, Geit in Gatesgarth, and Skögul in Skeggles Water. The Wikings Sölvar and Böll and Skall may be resting beneath their "haugr" or tomb-mound at Silver How, Bull How, and Scale How.[1]

Cumbria given to Malcolm.

While this outlier of northern life was being planted about the lakes, the Britons of Strath-Clyde were busy pushing their conquests to the south; in Eadmund's day indeed we find their border carried as far as the Derwent;[2] but whether from the large space of Cumbrian ground they had won or no, the name of Strath-Clyde from this time disappears, and is replaced by the name of Cumbria.[3] Whether as Strath-Clyde or Cumbria, its rulers had been among the opponents of the West-Saxon advance; they were among the confederates against Eadward as they were among the confederates against Æthelstan; and it was no doubt in return for a like junction in the hostilities against himself that Eadmund in 945 "harried

peopled by Celts and Norwegians. The Norwegian suffixes, gill, garth, haugh, thwaite, foss, and fell, are abundant; while the Danish forms, thorpe and toft, are almost unknown; and the Anglo-Saxon test-words, ham, ford, worth, and ton, are comparatively rare." Taylor, "Words and Places," p. 115.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 116. For the Norwegian settlements in the lakes, see Ferguson's "Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland."

[2] Skene, "Celtic Scotland," i. 362.

[3] Westmoringa-land survives, little changed in area, in our Westmoreland; our Cumberland is the fragment of the Strath-Clyde or Cumbrian kingdom which remained to England after the rest had gone to the Scottish kings.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

all Cumberland." But he turned his new conquest adroitly to account by using it to bind to himself the most dangerous among his foes; for he granted the greater part of it to the Scottish king on the terms that Malcolm should be "his fellow-worker by sea and land."[1] In the erection of this northern dependency we see the same forces acting, though on a more distant field, which had already begun the disintegration of the English realm in the formation of the great ealdormanries of the eastern coast. Its immediate results, however, were advantageous enough. Scot and Welshman, whose league had till now formed the chief force of opposition to English supremacy in the north, were set at variance; the road of the Ostmen was closed; while the fidelity of the Scot-king seemed to be secured by the impossibility of holding Cumbria against revolt without the support of his "fellow-worker" in the south.

The feud.

Hard as Eadmund had been pressed by these outer troubles, he had been far from neglecting the work of government at home. While the efforts of Æthelstan had been mainly directed to the security of order and of property, Eadmund dealt with the more formidable difficulty of the right of feud. The evil with which he dealt, and his attempts to reform it, have been already noticed in the sketch given of the history of English justice.[2] In spite of all bounds and limitations by which the rights of private vengeance had been restrained, the feud in Eadmund's day remained wholly incompatible with the new social order that

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 945.

[2] See ch. i. pp. 24-28.

had been developed alike by Christianity and by the growing sense of a common national life. Early justice had rested on the family bond, on the theory of the kinsfolk bound together by ties of mutual responsibility for vengeance and aid in self-defence. But as society became more complex it outgrew in great measure these earlier ties of blood; and the conception of personal responsibility which Christianity had taught helped to weaken the bonds of kinship. Eadmund shared in the "horror of the unrighteous and manifold fightings" which was felt in his day, and in his attempt to lay on the man-slayer himself the whole burden of his deed, to free his kinsfolk from the obligation of bearing the feud, and to protect them from the vengeance of the slain man's kin,[1] he not only attacked the custom of the feud, but struck a heavy blow at the old theory of kinship with its traditional responsibilities.

Death of Eadmund.

From questions of home government, however, the young king was soon called back to outer affairs. For the moment the triumphs of the two cousins on either side of the Channel seemed to have realized the hopes of Æthelstan. In England and France alike the men of the north lay at the feet of Lewis and Eadmund, for the presence of the northern primate and northern Jarls at the English court for the first time since Brunanburh, showed that the Danelaw was again subdued.[2] But the Danelaw had hardly given its allegiance to Eadmund when

[1] Ll. Eadmund. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 249.

[2] For Wulfstan, see Cod. Dip. 409. For the Jarls "Scule" and "Halfdene," Cod. Dip. 410.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

a sudden revolution wrested Normandy from his cousin's grasp. A fleet under the King of Denmark, Harald Blaatand, moored off the Cotentin and called the country to arms. The Normans gathered round the Danish host, while Duke Hugh, jealous of the power Lewis had won from his conquest on the Seine, joined the king's foes; and in 945 a victory of their united forces on the Dive broke the Frankish yoke. Not only was the king's army defeated, but Lewis himself was taken in the fight and given as a prisoner into the hands of Duke Hugh. The demand of Eadmund for his cousin's liberation shows that the two kings had been acting in concert against the northmen, while the answer of Hugh is notable as the first of a series of such defiances which from that day to this have passed between the lands on either side of the Channel. "I will do nothing for the Englishmen's threats!" said the duke. "Let them come and they will soon find what men of the Franks are worth in fight! or if they fear to come, they shall know at some time or other the might of the Franks and pay for their arrogance!" Master of all England at twenty-four, Eadmund could hardly have passed by a challenge such as this. But the quarrel was suddenly hushed by his death.[1] As he feasted at Pucklechurch in the May of 946, Leofa, a robber whom the king had banished from the land, entered the hall, seated himself at the royal board, and drew his sword on the cup-bearer when he bade him retire. Eadmund sprang in wrath to his thegn's aid, and, seizing Leofa by the

[1] Eng. Chron. (Winch.), a. 496. Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 228.

hair, flung him to the ground, but in the struggle the robber drove his dagger to the king's heart.

With the death of Eadmund a new figure comes to the front of English affairs, and the story of Abbot Dunstan of Glastonbury gives us a welcome glimpse into the inner life of England at a time when history hides it from us beneath the weary details of wars with the Danes.[1] In the heart of Somerset, at the

[1] The primary authority for Dunstan's life is an anonymous biography, written about A.D. 1000, a few years after his death, by a Saxon priest. Professor Stubbs, who has collected the various biographies in his "Memorials of S. Dunstan," has made it probable that this is a work of an exiled scholar from Liège, who was present in England at the archbishop's death, and was living under his protection. A second work, by Adelard of Ghent, was drawn up in the form of lessons to be read in the service of the monastery at Canterbury, and is hardly of later date than the first. After the Conquest a third life, much expanded, was drawn up by Osbern, and a fourth by Eadmer, both monks of Canterbury, while a little later on William of Malmesbury compiled a fifth, whose purpose was to bring out more fully Dunstan's connexion with Glastonbury. Even in the few years that passed between Dunstan's death and the life by Adelard a luxuriant growth of legend had taken place; but it is to the three last biographers that the wilder stories which gathered round the archbishop's name are mainly due. The life by the priest of Liège is simply disfigured by verbosity, and bears traces of deriving most of the earlier biographic details from the talk of Dunstan himself; its information and its silences (as in the history of Eadgar) are both probably due to this source. But even this antedates the monastic struggle, which had become so important at the time of its composition, by confusing it with the strife in Eadwig's reign. ("Memor. of Dunstan," Intro. p. vii.) Such as they are however, all these lives are of value for a time when we have, save in the meagre annals of the Chronicle, no contemporary materials but these and a few other hagiographies. (Stubbs, "Memorials of Dunstan," Intro. p. ix.)

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

927-
955.

base of the Tor, a hill that rose out of the waste of flood-drowned fen which then filled the valley of Glastonbury, lay in Æthelstan's day the estate of Heorstan, a man of wealth and noble blood, the kinsman of three bishops of the time and of many thegns of the court, if not of the king himself.[1] It was in Heorstan's hall that his son Dunstan, as yet a fair diminutive child with scant but beautiful hair, caught the passion for music that showed itself in his habit of carrying harp in hand on journey or visit, as in his love for the "vain songs of ancient heathendom, the trifling legends, and funeral chants,"[2] relics doubtless of a mass of older poetry that time has reft from us. But nobler strains than those of ancient heathendom were round the child as he grew to boyhood.[3] Ælfred's strife with the north-

[1] Bishop Elfege of Winchester and Kynsige of Lichfield were his kinsmen (see Saxon biographer, "Memorials," pp. 13, 32). So, says Adelard, (*ibid.* 55) was Archbishop Æthelm of Canterbury, but this may be a mistake for Bishop Æthelgar of Crediton. For his kin among the "Palatini," see Saxon Biogr. "Memor." p. 11. Æthelflæd, Æthelstan's niece, was also related to him (*ibid.* p. 17).

[2] Sax. Biog. ("Memor." p. 11), "avitæ gentilitatis vanissima didicisse carmina, et historiarum frivolas colere incantationum nænias."

[3] The date of his birth is a vexed question. "Hujus (Æthelstani) imperii temporibus oritur puer," says the Saxon biographer ("Memor." p. 6). The English Chronicle (though in what is probably a later insertion) takes "oritur" for "is born," and with all after-writers places his birth in Æthelstan's first year, 924 or 925. But if so, his appearance and expulsion from Æthelstan's court must have been before he was sixteen; his appointment as Abbot of Glastonbury at any rate before Eadmund's death in 946, when he was still but twenty-two; and

men was fresh in the memory of all. Athelney lay a few miles off across the Polden hills; and Wedmore, where the final frith was made and the chrism-fillet of Guthrum unloosed, rose out of the neighbouring marshes. Memories of Ine met the boy as he passed to school at Glastonbury, which still remained notable as a place of pilgrimage, though but a few secular priests clung to the house which the king had founded, and its lands had for the most part been stripped from it.[1] The ardour of Dunstan's temper was seen in the eagerness with which he plunged into the study of letters; and his knowledge became at last so famous in the neighbourhood that news of it reached the court. Dunstan was called there, no doubt as one of the young nobles who received their training in attendance on the king during boyhood and early youth;[2] but his appearance was the signal for a burst of jealousy among the royal thegns, though many were kinsmen of his own; he was forced to

his career as guide and counsellor of Eadred must have been between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-one. This seems very improbable, and the "oritur" may perhaps be fairly construed "rises into notice," which would throw back his birth into the days of Eadward. Granting this, Adelard's statement that Archbishop Æthelm, who died in the same year with Eadward, first brought him to court, may be true ("Memor." p. 55 and Introd. p. lxxviii.).

[1] It had a church "built by no art of man"; to which Æthelstan went on pilgrimage, and where "Hiberniensium perigrini" came to visit the tomb of a younger Patrick, bringing their books with them, which Dunstan read (Sax. Biog. "Memor." pp. 7, 10, 11).

[2] His age shows that this must be the meaning of the Saxon biographer's "inter regios proceres et palatinos principes electus." ("Memor." p. 21.)

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

withdraw, and when he was again summoned on the accession of Eadmund his rivals not only drove him from the king's train, but threw him from his horse as he rode through the marshes, and with the wild passion of their age trampled him underfoot in the mire.[1]

Made Abbot of Glastonbury.

The outrage brought fever, and in the bitterness of disappointment and shame Dunstan rose from his bed of sickness a monk.[2] But in England the monastic profession was at this time little more than a vow of celibacy and clerical life,[3] and his devotion took no ascetic turn. His nature in fact was sunny, versatile, artistic, full of strong affections and capable of inspiring others with affections as strong. Throughout his life he won the love of women, and in these earlier years of retirement at Glastonbury he became the spiritual guide of a woman of high rank who lived only for charity and the entertainment of pilgrims. "He ever clave to her and loved her in wondrous fashion." Quick-witted, of tenacious memory, a ready and fluent speaker, gay and genial of address, an artist, a musician, an indefatigable worker alike at books or handicraft, his sphere of activity widened as the wealth of his devotee was placed unreservedly at his command. We see him followed by a train of pupils, busy with literature, harping, painting, designing. In one pleasant tale of these days a lady summons him to her house to design a robe which she is embroidering, and

[1] Sax. Biog. ("Memor." p. 12).

[2] Sax. Biog. ("Memor." p. 14). He had been tonsured as a clerk from boyhood (p. 10).

[3] See Stubbs, "Mem. of Dunstan," Introd. lxxxiii.-v.

as Dunstan bends with her maidens over their toil the harp which he has hung on the wall sounds without mortal touch tones which the startled ears around frame into a joyous antiphon. But the tie which bound Dunstan to this scholar-life was broken by the death of his patroness; and towards the close of Eadmund's reign the young scholar was again called to the court. Even in Æthelstan's day he seems to have been known to both the younger sons of Eadward the Elder; and with one of these, Eadred, his friendship became of the closest kind. But the old jealousies revived; his life was again in danger; and the game seemed so utterly lost that Dunstan threw himself on the protection of some envoys who had come at this time from the German court of Otto to the English king.[1] He was preparing to return with them to their home in Saxony when an unlooked-for chance restored him suddenly to power. A red-deer which Eadmund was chasing over Mendip dashed down the Cheddar cliffs, and the king only checked his horse on the brink of the ravine. In the bitterness of anticipated death he had repented of his injustice to Dunstan; and on his return from the chase the young priest was summoned to his presence. "Saddle your horse," said Eadmund, "and ride with me!" The royal train swept over the marshes to Dunstan's home; and greeting him with the kiss of peace, the king seated him in the abbot's chair as Abbot of Glastonbury.[2]

[1] "Regni orientis nuncii cum rege tunc hospitantes." Sax. Biog. ("Memor." p. 23). I follow the suggestion of Professor Stubbs as to this "Eastern Realm."

[2] Kemble places this before 940, on faith of a charter (Cod.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

Eadred.

From that moment Dunstan may have exercised some influence on public affairs; but it was not till Eadmund's murder that his influence became supreme. Eadmund was but twenty-five years old when he died; and as his children, Eadwig and Eadgar, were too young to follow him on the throne, the crown passed to his last surviving brother, the Ætheling Eadred.[1] Eadred had long been bound by a close friendship to Dunstan; and a friendship as close bound the young abbot to the mother of the king, the wife of Eadward the Elder, who seems to have wielded the main influence at Eadred's court. It was of even greater moment that Dunstan seems to have been linked by a close intimacy with the "Half-King" Æthelstan. The fact that Æthelstan's wife Ælfwen is said to have been the foster-mother of Eadgar,[2] as well as his own elevation, proves the influence of the East-Anglian ealdorman in the reign of Eadmund; he was in fact already "Primarius,"[3] a post which reminds us of the office of Ælfred as "Secundarius," as possibly a germ of the later Justiciarship, and which at any rate placed him near to the king himself in the government of the realm. Under Eadred his influence became yet greater; he seems to

Dip. 384) of that year; but Professor Stubbs regards his signature as a later insertion. He certainly signed as abbot in 946 (Cod. Dip. 411); and his nomination was probably not much earlier (Stubbs, "Mem. of Dunstan," Intro. p. lxxx.).

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 946.

[2] Robertson, "Hist. Essays," 180.

[3] Sax. Biogr. ("Memor. of Dunstan"), p. 44. "Cujusdam primarii ducis, utpote Ælfstani;" and again, "prædicto comitante secum Primario."

have displaced Wulfgar, whose signature through Eadmund's days had preceded his own, as the leading counsellor of the crown, and signs first of all secular nobles through the coming reign.[1] It was with the support of Æthelstan that Dunstan from this moment stood among Eadred's advisers.

The fourfold realm.

Of his political work indeed we know little, but we can hardly mistake his hand in the solemn proclamation which announced the king's crowning at Kingston.[2] The crowning of Eadred indeed was a fresh step forward towards a national kingship. His election was the first national election, the first election by a witenagemot where Briton and Dane and Englishmen were alike represented, where Welsh under-kings and Danish jarls sate side by side with English nobles and bishops. His coronation was in the same way the first national coronation, the first

[1] See the charters of these reigns in the Codex Diplomaticus.

[2] Cod. Dip. 411, a grant to the "pedisequus" Wulfric, apparently one of a number of coronation grants, at any rate of the first year, "quo sceptra diadematum Angul-Saxna cum Nordhymbris et Paganorum cum Brettonibus (Eadredus) gubernabat," is prefaced by what looks like a general proclamation of the new sovereign. "Concedente gratia Dei . . contigit post obitum Eadmundi regis, qui regimina regnorum Angul-Saxna, et Nordhymbra, Paganorum Brettonumque, septem annorum intervallo regaliter gubernabat, quod Eadred frater ejus uterinus, electione optimatum subrogatus, pontificali auctoritate eodem anno catholice est rex et rector ad regna quadripartiti regiminis consecratus, qui denique rex in villa quæ dicitur regis, Cyngestun, ubi consecratio peracta est, plura plurimis perenniter condonavit carismata." This is attested by the two archbishops, Odo and Wulfstan, ten bishops, "Howael regulus, Marcant, Cadmo," and by "Urm, Imorcer eorl, Grim, Andcoll eorl," and "Dunstan abbud."

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

union of the primate of the north and the primate of the south in setting the crown on the head of one who was to rule from the Forth to the Channel.[1] In the phrase which describes the new king as "designated by the choice of the nobles, and by the authority of the bishops consecrated king,' we may catch a foreshadowing of the constitutional theory which Dunstan afterwards embodied in the crowning and coronation oath of Eadgar at Bath, as his attempt to find a general name for the royal dominions in the "Fourfold Realm" shows a fresh advance towards his final conception of a Kingdom of England.[2]

[1] At the death of Æthelstan, Northumbria stood apart with its own under-king, so that such a Witenagemot was impossible.

[2] Eadred, like his brother, commonly signs himself "Rex Anglorum," and styles himself "Rex Anglorum cæterarumque gentium in circuitu persistentium," &c. (Cod. Dip. 413, 1156, 1157, 1159, 1161-1164), a phrase which the "fourfold realm" now enables us to define. The "peoples surrounding" the English are strictly the "Britons," "Pagans" or Danes of Mid-Britain, and "Northumbrians." Among the variations we find "rex et primicerius totius Albionis," Cod. Dip. 1168; and in a number of other charters "totius Albionis monarchus et primicerius," *ib.* 425, "rex Albionis," *ib.* 1167. In 949 Eadred is he "quem Northymbra paganorumque seu cæterarum sceptro provinciarum Rex Regum omnipotens sublimavit, quique præfatus Imperator semper Deo grates dignissimus largâ manu subministrat," Cod. Dip. 424. But another charter of the same year shows that this "Imperator" must be taken in a rhetorical rather than technical use; "Eadredus rex Anglorum, rectorque Nordhanymbra, et Paganorum imperator, Brittonumque propugnator," Cod. Dip. 426, where we have the fourfold realm recurring, and the "Empire" restricted to the Danes of Mid-Britain. In 955 however the style became really Imperial, "Angul-Seaxna Eadred cyning et casere totius Britanniæ," Cod. Dip. 433.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

Eric Hiring.

Eadred's first year was a time of quiet. After the peace with Eadmund, Olaf, Sihtric's son, so long the foe of the English kings but now apparently acting as their under-king, seems to have reigned beyond the Tees, while Ragnald, Gudferth's son, ruled in our Yorkshire. The north submitted quietly to Eadred's rule, while the Scots renewed the oath of "fellow-workmanship" which they had given to his predecessor in exchange for the cession of Cumbria.[1] The country however soon became restless enough to call for the king's presence; and in the following year, 947,[2] Eadred advanced to "Taddenescylf," and there received the oath of personal allegiance from the Northumbrian witan. Among them the chronicle makes no mention of any under-kings at all, and Wulfstan stands alone as the foremost man of the north. But formal as the recognition was, neither witan nor archbishop were long bound by it.[3] "Within a little while" (apparently before the year was out) "they belied it all, both pledge and oath."[4] They may have been tempted to a rising by the presence of the Danish king, Harald Blaatand, or Blue-Tooth, off their coast. The Danish kingdom which had been

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 946.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worcester), a. 947.

[3] Wulfstan however must have been at Eadred's court in 947, 948, and 949, as he signs charters in all these years (Cod. Dip. 1157, 1158, 1159, 1161, 1162, 1163, 424, 425, 426), so that he can hardly have taken any active part in this rising.

[4] Eng. Chron. (Worc.). a. 947. This is the only chronicle that gives much information as to this reign: that of Winchester tells only Eadred's accession and death.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

sub-king under Eadred, for there is no record of further strife; and the king must throughout these years have been quietly getting a firmer grip on the Danelaw. In 952 indeed he ventured on an act which marked him as its master. The submission after Chesterford had no doubt won pardon for Wulfstan's share in the revolt that so soon followed his oath-taking at Taddenescylf, as for the share of his fellow-rebels; but to the English court, where the young king and his ministers were alike swayed by a religious revival, the forswearing of an archbishop took a different colour from that of a Dane, nor had the primate's course during the years that followed been free from charges of fresh disloyalty.[1] He "had been often accused to the king," but it was not till 952 that he was seized, and brought as a prisoner before Eadred in the fortress of Jedburgh.[2]

The Northumbrian earldom.

The arrest of the archbishop was due no doubt to suspicions of his complicity in a fresh rising in Northumbria, where Olaf was in the same year driven out by his subjects and Eric Hiring again received as their king.[3] Of the strife that followed through

information even from the Worcester Chronicle ceases here, save that it tells of Wulfstan's arrest in 952. Skene, "Celt. Scot." i. 363, identifies this Olaf with Sihtric's son; Earle, "Paral. Chron." 118, note, makes him another Olaf.

[1] As we have seen, Wulfstan's presence at Eadred's court in 947 and 948 is hardly compatible with any active sharing in the rising of the north during these years. He is there still in 949 (Cod. Dip. 424, 425, 426, 427); but I do not see his name afterwards.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 952. He was released two years after on the death of Eric, *ib.* 954.

[3] This is again from the late Peterborough Chronicle, and may

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

the next two years we know only the close, the renewed expulsion of Eric, and the fresh submission of the Danelaw to Eadred.[1] But short and uneventful as the struggle was, it was the last; for with the submission of 954 the long work of Ælfred's house was done. Dogged as his fight had been, the Dane at last owned himself beaten; from the moment of Eadred's final triumph all resistance came to an end; and the close of the under-kingdom proclaimed that the north was brought into the general organization of the English realm. The policy of the great ealdormanries however triumphed again over that of national union. Though Eadred in 954 "took," like Æthelstan, "to the kingdom of the Northumbrians,"[2] he made no attempt to restore the direct rule of Æthelstan's early years. He contented himself with reducing the under-kingdom to an earldom, and governing it through an Englishman instead of a Dane. Oswulf, who had till now held a semi-independent position as "high-reeve" of Bernicia, was set over both Bernicia and Deira as earl of the Northumbrians.

The School at Glastonbury.

Dunstan seems to have accompanied the king into Northumbria after its subjugation, at least as

possibly be a mere blunder for Eric's reception in 949, as given in the Worcester Chronicle (D), which knows nothing of these later events.

[1] The account in the Chronicle differs widely here from that of the later Saga of Hakon the Good (Laing's "Sea-kings," i. 318), which takes this Eric for a son of Harald Fair-hair, who enters Northumbria for plunder, encounters a king named Olaf, "whom King Eadmund had set to defend the land," and falls in battle against fearful odds.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.), a. 954.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-955.

far as Chester-le-Street, where he saw the remains of St. Cuthbert still resting in the temporary refuge which they had found after their removal from Lindisfarne;[1] and it was probably under his counsel that Eadred resolved to put an end to the subject royalty of the north and to set up the new earldom of the Northumbrians. The abbot's post probably answered in some way to that of the later chancellor;[2] and as we find the hoard in his charge at the end of the reign,[3] he must then have combined with this the office of the later treasurer. Of the details of his political work however during this period nothing is told us. But of the intellectual and literary work which he was carrying on throughout the reign we are allowed to see a little more. It was in fact in these nine years that the more important part of his educational work was done. If much of his time was necessarily spent at Winchester or with the royal court, the bulk of it seems still to have been given to his Abbey of Glastonbury, and to the school which was growing up within its walls. He himself led the way in the work of teaching. Tradition told of the kindliness with which he won the love of his scholars,[4] the psalms sung with them as they journeyed

[1] Stubbs, "Mem. of Dunst." p. 379.

[2] In 949 at the close of a grant to Reculver we find "Ego Dunstan indignus abbas rege Eadredo imperante hanc domino meo hereditariam Cartulam dictitando composui, et propriis digitorum articulis perscripsi" (Cod. Dip. 425).

[3] Stubbs, "Mem. of Dunst." Introd. lxxxvi. lxxxvii.

[4] It is an amusing contrast to the common portraiture of Dunstan that at his own Canterbury a hundred years after his

together, the vision that comforted Dunstan for the loss of one little scholar as he saw the child borne heavenwards in the arms of angels. In the library of Glastonbury some interesting memorials of his scholastic work were preserved even to the time of the Reformation, books on the Apocalypse, a collection of canons drawn from his Irish teachers, passages transcribed from Frank and Roman law-books, notes on measure and numbers, a pamphlet on grammar, a mass of biblical quotations, tables for calculating Easter, and a book of Ovid's Art of Love which jostled oddly with an English homily on the Invention of the Cross.[1]

Its influence on English literature.

From its remote site in the west, Glastonbury threw off an offshoot into Central Britain. In 955 Æthelwold, Dunstan's chief scholar and assistant in his educational work, received from Eadred a gift of the Abbey of Abingdon,[2] a house which we noted as

death he was regarded as the patron and protector of schoolboys. Once, in Anselm's time, when the yearly whipping-day arrived for the Cathedral school the poor little wretches crowded weeping to his shrine and sought aid from their "dear father Dunstan." Dunstan it was, so every schoolboy believed, who sent the masters to sleep, and then set them quarrelling till the whipping blew over.

[1] "Memor. of Dunst." Intr. cx.-xii. "Several of these pieces," says Prof. Stubbs, "contain British glosses, and furnish some of the earliest specimens of Welsh."

[2] Chron. Abingd. (ed. Stevenson), vol. i. 124. Æthelwold "disposuit ultra-marinas partes adire, causâ se imbuendi seu sacris libris seu monasticis disciplinis perfectius: sed prævenit venerabilis regina Eadgifu, mater regis Eadredi, ejus conamina, dans consilium regi ne talem virum sineret egredi de regno suo. Placuit tunc regi Eadredo, suadente matre sua, dare venerabili Athelwoldo quendam locum, vocabulo Abbandun." Vit. Æthel-

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937.
955.

growing up in the eighth century by the side of the Thames, and which had since been ruined by the incursions of the Danes. Settling there with a few clerks from Glastonbury,[1] the new abbot soon gathered a school whose activity more than rivalled that of the house from which it sprang. From these two centres the movement spread through Wessex and Mercia. In both the impulse given by Ælfred had been checked, but not arrested, by the stress of war. So large a part of the mass of our early literature has been lost that we can hardly draw any conclusion from the scarcity of its remains in the period which followed the king's death; indeed the larger and more literary tone of the English Chronicle through the reign of Eadward the Elder is a sufficient proof that the earlier intellectual movement had still its representatives through the first years of the struggle with the Danelaw.[2] Even when in Æthelstan's day the Chronicle sinks into meagre annals, a fortunate chance reveals to us, in the battle-songs and death-songs embedded in its pages, the existence of a mass of English verse of which all memory would otherwise have perished. Side by side, too, with this statelier song we catch glimpses of a wilder and

woldi, Chron. Abingdon (ed. Stevenson), vol. ii. 257. Did the writ "ne exeas regno" already exist?

[1] "Quem statim secuti sunt quidam clerici de Glastoniâ, hoc est Osgarus, Foldbirchtus, Frithegarus, et Ordbirchtus de Wintonia, et Eadricus de Lundoniâ." Vit. Ethelwoldi, Chron. Abingd. (ed. Stevenson), ii. 258, an interesting passage, as showing from how wide a range Glastonbury had drawn.

[2] See the mention by Will. of Malmesbury of a book written in Æthelstan's time. "Gest. Reg." (ed. Hardy), i. p. 209. (A. S. G.)

more romantic upgrowth of popular verse, which wrapped in an atmosphere of romance the lives of kings such as Æthelstan and Eadgar.[1]

Dunstan's own youth indeed, his zeal for letters, and the fact that he found books and teachers to meet his zeal, show that the impulse which Ælfred had given was far from having spent its force in his grandson's days. But there can be no doubt that the foundation of the two schools at Glastonbury and Abingdon gave to this impulse a new strength and guidance. It is from them that we must date the rise of the second old English literature, a literature which bears the stamp of Wessex, as the first had borne the stamp of Northumbria. In poetry this literature was, no doubt, inferior to its predecessor; there was nothing to rival the verse of Cadmon or the poems of Cynewulf. But the later time may justly claim as its own the creation of a stately historic verse of which fragments remain in the battle-songs of Brunanburh and Maldon, or the death-songs of Eadgar or Eadward. The love of poetry was seen even in the series of translations to which we really owe our knowledge of the earlier Northumbrian song. Save for a few lines embedded in Bæda or graven on

[1] Malmesbury has preserved for us in his "Gesta Regum" prose versions of some of these ballads. The ballads of Æthelstan are:—(1) The Birth of the King; (2) the Drowning of Eadwine; (3) The Craft of Anlaf. There are besides three ballads of Eadgar:—(1) The Slave Queen; (2) Eadgar and Ælfthryth; (3) Eadgar and the Scot-King. How vigorous this ballad literature was we see from the preservation of these down to the twelfth century, when they were introduced by the writers of the time into our history, much to its confusion.

CHAP. VI.

Wessex and the Danelaw.

937-
955.

the Rothewell cross, this mass of song in its Northumbrian dress has wholly vanished. What we learn of Cadmon or the lyrics, we have only in the West-Saxon garb which was given them at this period, and which witnesses to a new thirst for poetry in the south. But the bulk of the work done in this later time was a work of prose; and like that of Ælfred from which it started, of popular prose. Disappointed as we may be in a literary sense when we front its mass of homilies and scriptural versions and saints' lives and grammar and lesson-books, they tell us of a clergy quickened to a new desire for knowledge, and of a like quickening of educational zeal among the people at large.

Eadred's death.

But whatever was the result of Dunstan's literary work, it was interrupted by Eadred's death. The young king was at the height of his renown. The real weakness of the royal power had yet to disclose itself, and the presence of great earls or ealdormen at Eadred's court only seemed to add to its lustre. The land had at last won peace. The jarls of the north, Urm and Grim, and Gunnar and Scule, sat quietly in the witenagemot as they had sat in the witenagemots of Æthelstan. There too sat as quietly the princes of Wales, Morecant and Owen.[1] Such a mastery of Britain raised yet higher the pretensions of the crown. The reorganization of the Roman

[1] Cod. Dip. 426, 433. When Eadred visits Abingdon, "contingit adesse sibi non paucos venientes gentis Northanhymbrorum," who got drunk over the feast, "inebriatis Northumbris statim ac vesperi recedentibus." Vit. Ethelwoldi, Chron. Abingd. (ed Stevenson), ii. 258.

Empire at this juncture by Otto the Great, and the claim of supremacy which the emperor put forth over the countries of the west, may have given a fresh impulse to the assumption of titles which not only expressed the new might of the royal power, but indicated that the English king held himself to be fellow and not subject to the German.[1] It is at any rate in Eadred's last year of rule that we find the first clear instance of the use of a strictly imperial style in the titles of our king, for Eadred not only styled himself King of the Anglo-Saxons but "Cæsar of the whole of Britain."[2] What exact force lay in these pompous titles the English Chancery, if we may use the term of a later time, would possibly have found it hard to explain; vague however as they were, they no doubt expressed in some sort a claim to political supremacy over the whole British island as complete as that which Otto claimed over the western world. But while his clerks were framing these lofty phrases, the king's life was drawing to a close. Throughout his reign Eadred had fought against sickness and weakness of body as nobly as he had fought against the Dane,[3] and now that his work was done the over-wrought frame gave way. Dunstan was at Glastonbury, where the royal hoard was then in keeping, when news came in November, 955, that the king lay death-smitten at Frome.[4] The

[1] In 949 there were envoys of Eadred at Otto's court at Aachen. Lappenberg, "Hist. Angl. Sax." ii. 156.
[2] Cod. Dip. 433.
[3] Sax. Biog. "Mem. of Dunstan" (Stubbs), p. 31.
[4] Sax. Biog. "Mem. of Dunstan" (Stubbs), p. 31.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

in the power, and still more in the pretensions of the Crown. The same movement which in other lands was breaking up every nation into a mass of loosely-knit states, with nobles at their head who owned little save a nominal allegiance to their king, threatened to break up England itself. What hindered its triumph was the power of the Crown, and it is the story of the struggle of the monarchy with these tendencies to provincial isolation which fills the period between the conquest of the Danelaw and the conquest of England itself by the Norman. It was a struggle which England shared with the rest of the western world, but its issue here was a peculiar one. In other countries feudalism won an easy victory over the central government. In England alone the monarchy was strong enough to hold it at bay. But if feudalism proved too weak to conquer the monarchy, it was strong enough to paralyze its action. Neither of the two forces could master, but each could weaken the other, and the conflict of the two could disintegrate England as a whole. From the moment when their rivalry broke into actual strife the country lay a prey to disorder within and to insult from without.

The Monarchy.

The upgrowth of the kingly power had been brought about, as we have seen, by a number of varied influences. It had drawn new strength from the dying out of the other royal stocks leaving the house of Cerdic alone, and from the high character of the kings of Ælfred's line. A long series of victories, the constant sight and recognition of the king as head of the national host, and the religious character with

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

which the leadership in war against a heathen foe invested him, had added to the royal dignity; and new claims to authority had sprung from the gradual up-building of England, and the extent of dominion brought under the king's rule, from the balance of Danish and anti-Danish parties in the realm, and from the king's position as common political centre of the English provinces. Along with the advance thus brought about in the authority of the Crown, there went on a change in the old Teutonic conception of kingship, and an imitation of Imperial claims aided by intercourse with the Imperial court. The solemn coronation of the king, the oath of fidelity, the identification of loyalty with personal troth to the personal king, the doctrine of treason, the haughty claims to a far-reaching supremacy, the vaunting titles assumed in charters, all point to a new conception of royalty. But the royal claims lay still far ahead of the real strength of the Crown. There was a want of administrative machinery in actual connexion with the government, responsible to it, drawing its force directly from it, and working automatically in its name even in moments when the royal power was itself weak or wavering. The king's power was still a personal power. He had to be everywhere and to see for himself that everything he willed was done. Resting on feeling, on tradition, on personal character, the Crown was strong under a king who was strong, whose personal action was felt everywhere throughout the realm, whose dread lay on every reeve and ealdorman. But with a weak king the Crown was weak. Ealdormen, provincial

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

witenagemots, local jurisdictions, ceased to move at the royal bidding the moment direct pressure was loosened or removed. Enfeebled as they were, the old provincial jealousies, the old tendency to severance and isolation lingered on, and woke afresh when the Crown fell to a nerveless ruler or to a child.

The Ealdormen.

At the moment we have reached the royal power and the national union it embodied had to battle with the impulse given to these tendencies towards national disintegration by the struggle with the northman. We have seen how the spirit of feudalism was aided and furthered by the Danish wars, by the growth of commendation and the decrease of free allodial owners, and by the importance given to the military temper. In the ealdormen themselves the feudal spirit was strengthened by the memories of provincial independence, and by the continued existence of what had once been older kingdoms and diverse peoples, as well as by the retention of their popular life in the survival of their old judicial and administrative forms. Popular feeling and feudal tendencies went in fact hand in hand. The new ealdormen created by the later West-Saxon kings had hardly taken their place as mere lieutenants of the national sovereign before they again began to rise into petty kings, and in the century which follows we see Mercian or Northumbrian thegns following a Mercian or Northumbrian ealdorman to the field, though it were against the lord of the land. Even the constitutional forms which sprang from the old English freedom tended to invest these higher nobles with a commanding power. In the "great meeting" of the

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Witenagemot or Assembly of the Wise lay the rule of the realm, but distance and the hardships of travel made the presence of the lesser thegns as rare as that of the free-men; and the ealdormen became of increasing importance in the national council. The old English democracy had thus all but passed into an oligarchy of the narrowest kind. But powerful as they might be, the English ealdormen never succeeded in becoming really hereditary or independent of the Crown. Kings as weak as Æthelred could drive them into exile and replace them by fresh nominees. If the Witenagemot enabled the great nobles to bring their power to bear directly on the Crown, it preserved at any rate a feeling of national unity, and was ready to back the Crown against individual revolt. The Church too never became feudalized. The bishop clung to the Crown, and the bishop remained a great social and political power. As local in area as the ealdorman, for the province was his diocese and he sat by the side of the ealdorman in the local Witenagemot, he furnished a standing check on the independence of the great nobles.

Eadwig.

The death of Eadred formed the occasion for an immediate outbreak of political strife. The flight of the thegns from his death-bed was the sign of a court revolution. Eadred had died childless, but his brother Eadmund had left two children, Eadwig and Eadgar, and the eldest of these was now called to the throne.[1] Mere boy of fifteen

[1] As he mounted the throne in November, 955, and died in October, 958, Eadwig's reign covers hardly three years.

NEW YORK

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealderman.

955-
956.

as he was,[1] we find the new king the centre of an opposition party, hostile to the system of Eadred's reign.[2] In its outset the struggle seems to have been one for influence between the kindred of the king, the leading nobles of Wessex,[3] and the three who had directed affairs in Eadred's name, his mother Eadgifu, the great ealdorman of East-Anglia, and Abbot Dunstan of Glastonbury. In this struggle the first party proved successful. The charters of the time show that the king's kinsmen, Ælfhere, Ælfheah, and Æthelmær, stand at this time first among his counsellors,[4] while Eadgifu was driven from court, as well as bereft of her property.[5] The Half-King, Ealdorman Æthelstan, however, and Dunstan[6] held

[1] Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunst." Introd. lxxxviii.

[2] Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," Introduction, lxxxviii. Robertson, "Hist. Essays," 191, conjectures from Dunstan's connection with the East-Anglian house and Eadgifu, as from the combination of "his own disciples" against him at this time, that "he had allied himself with the party in the state opposed to the leading nobility of Wessex, who were the principal characters round the throne during the reigns of Æthelstan and Eadmund."

[3] The Saxon biographer says that most of Eadmund's nobles "lapsed from the path of rectitude," that is, opposed Dunstan and his fellow-rulers.

[4] The second charter of Eadwig is a grant to Ælfhere as his "kinsman," descended "a carissimis predecessoribus." Cod. Dip. 437. This was the Mercian ealdorman of later days. The assertion of the twelfth-century biographers of Dunstan that Eadwig banished his kinsmen from court "is contradicted by every grant and charter of his reign." Robertson, "Hist. Essays," p. 193.

[5] She says herself, "Eadred died, and Eadgifu was bereft of all her property." Cod. Dip. 499.

[6] Osbern (sec. 25) accuses Eadwig of from the first changing

their ground[1] at court for a while, in spite of the efforts of Æthelgifu, a woman of high lineage, whose influence over Eadwig had played no slight part in the change of counsellors. Darker tales floated about of Æthelgifu's purpose to wed the boy-king to her daughter, a marriage which from their kinship in blood the religious opinion of the day regarded as incestuous; and when the Witan gathered to crown Eadwig, the jealousy of the two parties, as well as the irritation which her influence caused, was seen in a strife at the coronation feast.[2]

The strife of parties.

To realize the import of this strife we must recall the sacred associations that hung round the crowning of a king.[3] It was in itself a solemn office of the Church. It was the primate of the whole English people who called on the people for their "yea" or "nay." The king's vow to govern rightly was given before the altar. He was anointed with holy oil. The crown was set on his head by priestly hands. The prayers of the multitude went up for him to heaven as he was "hallowed to king." With the new sacredness about him, still crowned with the royal

his counsellors "despectis majoribus natu, puerorum consilia sectabatur," of pillaging rich people and churches—and of plundering and outraging the Queen-mother, Eadgifu. Osbern also says that Dunstan by threats and exhortations opposed all this and the marriage, but finding his efforts vain, withdrew.

[1] Dunstan signs charters till the coronation: Æthelstan still signs at the head of the ealdormen to the close of the year.

[2] The coronation feast took place on the first or second Sunday after the Epiphany, 956 (Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan." Introd. lxxxviii.).

[3] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 170, gives the history of our coronations.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-
988.

crown, still clad in the royal robes that bishops and priests had put upon him, his hair still dripping with the holy oil, the new ruler passed from church to guest-hall, and sate for the first time amidst Witan and people gathered in solemn feast before him as their consecrated head. But the sense of his hallowing fell lightly on Eadwig. Withdrawing on slight pretext from the coronation feast, he delayed his return, till whispers ran through the hall that he had retired to his own chamber and the society of Æthelgifu.[1] The slight stung nobles and bishops to the quick; and though Archbishop Odo stilled the uproar, the Witan bade Dunstan and Bishop Kynesige of Lichfield bring back the king, willing or unwilling.[2] The envoys found Eadwig between Æthelgifu and her daughter, the crown flung heedlessly at his feet. Hot words passed; and as the boy refused to rise, Dunstan carried out the bidding of the Witan by dragging him with his own hand to the guest-hall, and setting him in his kingly seat.[3] The deed was

[1] Will. Malm. "Vit. Dunst." sec. 26, "Ille quasi ventris desiderio pulsatus, primo in secretum, mox in triclinium fœminarum concessit."

[2] "Volentem vel nolentem," Sax. Biog. sec. 21.

[3] Such seems the simple story of an event on which "much has been written, and an amount of criticism spent altogether out of proportion to the materials for its history." (Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," Introd. lxxxix.) The account given by our earliest authority, the Saxon biographer, and of which all later stories are but exaggerations, attributes indeed the whole outbreak to a monstrous lust of Eadwig for both Æthelgifu and her daughter. We may dismiss this the more easily that its narrator clearly forgets that Eadwig was a mere boy, that the daughter became Eadwig's queen not a year later, and that what remains after dismissing

one not likely to be forgiven, either by Eadwig or by Æthelgifu, whom the abbot in his wrath at her resistance had threatened with death; and as the year went on he felt the weight of her hand. Dunstan was driven from the realm by a sentence of outlawry; and men charged to tear out his eyes reached the shore as he put out to sea and steered for the coast of Flanders,[1] where Arnulf gave him shelter in the great abbey, just restored by the count's munificence, beside which the town of Ghent was growing up.

The Mercian ealdormanry.

The triumph of the rival party was completed at the close of the year by the withdrawal to a monastery of the "half-king," Æthelstan, whose ealdormanry seems for a time to have been parted between his four sons. But the price of this triumph had to be paid in a new disintegration of the realm. Before the end of the same year, 956, the leader of the king's kin, Ælfhere, was made ealdorman of the Mercians. The revival of the Mercian ealdormanry was a far more significant step than the creation of the caldormanries that had preceded it; for while they had been but divisions of the Danelaw, this was a parting of that purely English kingdom of the "Angul-Saxons" which Eadward had formed by the union of Wessex and of Mercia, and which had

this scandal is quite enough to account for the event. His story, it must be remembered, was written forty years after the occurrence, and here is clearly not derived from Dunstan himself.

[1] Sax. Biog. sec. 23. The importance of his withdrawal to Ghent is well shown by Stubbs ("Memor. of Dunst." Intr. cxx.). The Saxon biographer calls it "ignotam jam regionem dictu Galliæ, cujus pœne loquelam ritumque ignorabat."

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

served ever since as the nucleus of the growing realm.[1] And not only was this inner and purely English kingdom broken up, but it was broken into two nearly equal parts. In extent, in population, in wealth, the Mercian ealdormanry, stretching as it did from Bristol to Manchester and from the Watling Street to Offa's Dyke,[2] was little inferior to the region south of Thames which was left to the king. The court revolution, in fact, had ended in prisoning Eadwig within the limits of a dominion which was hardly larger than the dominion of any one of his own ealdormen,[3] and in leaving him at the mercy of the

[1] Amidst all the changes of the royal style, the one phrase which the Chancery always falls back upon as really descriptive of the character of the realm which the House of Ælfred had built up is "King of the Angul-Saxons, and of the peoples that lie about them."

[2] It was in the main co-extensive with the Mercia of Æthelred and Æthelflæd, save in the valley of the Thames, which may have passed to the East-Saxon ealdormanry.

[3] As to the order of events in 956 we gain no information from chronicle or biographers. The charters however give a few hints which I have used in the text. (1) That for some months of the year Dunstan and Æthelstan remained counsellors at court is shown by their joint signatures to several charters (*e.g.* Cod. Dip. 1191, 1196-7) in which Æthelstan still signs first among the "duces," while Ælfhere still signs as "comes" or "minister." (2) In a smaller group Dunstan's name is no longer found, but Æthelstan still signs at the head of the "duces," and Ælfhere remains "minister" (*e.g.* Cod. Dip. 1198). (3) In a third, Æthelstan still signs first, but Ælfhere signs as "dux," no doubt as Ealdorman of Mercia (Cod. 1179, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1190, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1199, &c.) (4) Æthelstan disappears, and Ælfhere signs as head of the "duces" (*e.g.* Cod. Dip. 1207). (There is a second and inferior "Æthelstan dux," whose signature has gone on side by

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

four great houses who parted all the rest of Britain between them.

How helpless the Crown had become in face of these great houses was shown by the events that followed. The two court parties who had triumphed over Dunstan and Æthelstan quarrelled over their victory. They had won the king, but their joint possession was disturbed when Æthelgifu in 957 wedded her daughter Ælfgifu[1] to Eadwig, and the jealousy of the king's kin was shown by their withdrawal from the king's court, as well as by their persuading his younger brother, Eadgar, to join in this withdrawal.[2] For a while Archbishop Odo remained at court, though denouncing the marriage as against Church law; but before the year ended the disregard of his remonstrances forced

side with the first, and who signs on into the next year: but he is clearly distinguishable from the East-Anglian ealdorman by the position of his signature.) As the last charters are few, we may suppose that Æthelstan only withdrew from court towards the end of the year.

[1] Cod. Dip. 1201. An exchange of lands is witnessed by "Ælfgifu the king's wife, and Æthelgifu the king's wife's mother," besides three bishops and one ealdorman, Byrhtnoth.

[2] The charters show that Eadgar remained with his brother up to May, 957 (Cod. Dip. 465). We are however far less aided by these documents than in 956, when their number is very large, perhaps from the abundance of coronation grants. In 957 we have but few, and there is little to show to what part of the year they belong. In one group we find Eadgar and the full court as at the close of 956 (Cod. Dip. 463, 465, May 9); in another, though Archbishop Odo and the bishops remain, Eadgar and Ælfhere are both missing (*e.g.* Cod. Dip. 467, 468, where but two "duces" sign, Eadmund and Æthelsige); in a third Odo is added to the number of absentees, there are few bishops, while to the duces, Eadmund and Æthelsige, are added Ælfred, Ælfric, and Ælfsige (Cod. Dip. 1209, 1210).

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

him also to retire, and his solemn sentence "parted King Eadwig and Ælfgifu, for that they were of kin."[1] The sentence was at once followed by a general revolt. The new ealdorman whom Eadwig had set over Mid-Britain was the first to move against him; for it could but have been at Ælfhere's bidding that the Mercians rose and chose Eadgar for their king.[2] The ealdor-

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 958. Of this separation the Saxon biographer and Adelard say nothing, while Osbern gives another tale.

[2] As we have seen, the revolt cannot have been earlier than May, and as Odo remained after Eadgar's withdrawal, probably not earlier than the later months of the year. On the other hand, it "cannot be later than the spring of 958, as in that year Eadgar begins to issue charters as king" (Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," Introd. lxxxix.—xc.) The assertion of Dunstan's biographers that it arose out of Eadwig's attacks on monks is a confusion of this struggle with the struggle after Eadgar's death. Robertson ("Historical Essays," 193) says justly enough, "Eadwig is accused of dissolving the monasteries of Glastonbury and Abingdon, and of banishing the Benedictines from England, yet he was the earliest benefactor of Abingdon, for his grants of Ginge and other lands in 956 are realities, while the charter of Eadred, dated in 955 and witnessed by Oscytel, as archbishop of York, is a forgery. Æthelwold, 'father of the monks,' with Ælfric of Malmesbury and two other abbots, attest his latest charter in 959: the clergy as well as the laïty of Wessex were his staunchest supporters—Ælfwold, recommended for the see of Crediton by Dunstan, Daniel, and Brithelm of Wells, among the bishops of his party, are claimed by Malmesbury as *alumni* of Glastonbury—and there were no Benedictines at that time in England to drive away. The struggle between secular and regular began in the reign of Eadgar, and was antedated long afterwards to throw odium on Edwy. If Dunstan was among the supporters of Eadgar, Edwy could point to Æthelwold as his follower, for the contest was fought on political grounds, and not about a question of ecclesiastical discipline"

manries of the eastern coast however, with the Five Boroughs and the Northumbrian earldom, must have joined Ælfhere in his revolt, for the whole land north of the Thames soon owned the rule of Eadgar, and only Wessex remained faithful to Eadwig.[1] On the young king's part no resistance seems to have been possible; a joint meeting of the Mercian and West-Saxon Witenagemots agreed on the division of the realm;

[1] Will. Malmesbury ("Vit. Dunst." lib. 2, sec. 3) says the West-Saxons rose too, but reconciled themselves to Eadwig, perhaps on his abandonment of his wife. Of the northern rising our knowledge is small. It is mentioned in only one chronicle, and then under a wrong year. The Saxon biographer of Dunstan calls it vaguely a rising of the "northern people" ("a Brumali populo relinqueretur;" so Eadgar is chosen king of the "Brumales"), but gives no definition of them. With Osbern, who is the first to give a detailed account of this revolution, it was strictly a rising of the Mercians, "virorum ab Humbre fluvio usque ad Tamesium." (Sec. 28.) Eadwig, he says, was in Mercia when the sudden rising took place. "Coacti in turbam regem cum adulterâ fugitantem atque in inviis sese occultantem armis persequi non desistunt. Et ipsam quidem juxta Claudiam civitatem repertam subnervavere deinde qua morte digna fuerat mulctavere. Porro regem per diversa locorum semestra deviantem ultra flumen Tamisium compulere." (*Ib.*) Eadgar is then chosen king "super omnes provincias ab Humbre usque ad Tamisium," and war follows for a while. In all this Eadmer follows Osbern. The signatures however of Archbishop Oscytel and of many northern jarls to Eadgar's charter of 959 (Cod. Dip. 480) when Eadgar is "totius Merciæ provinciæ necnon et aliorum gentium in circuitu persistentium gubernator et rector," and which is attested by Dunstan of London and other Mercian bishops, show Northumbria and East-Anglia as taking equal part with Mercia in the revolt. Ælfhere signs first among the ealdormen, followed by Æthelstan and Æthelwold of East-Anglia. Of northern names we see "Oskytel dux," and Sigwulf, Ulfkytel, Rold, Dragmel, Thurferth, and Thurcytel, among the "ministri."

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-958.

Its end.

and the Thames was fixed as the boundary between the dominions of the two brothers.[1]

The importance of the revolution lay in its revelation of the weakness of the monarchy. At its first clash with the forces it had itself built up, the realm of Eadward and Æthelstan shrank helplessly into its original Wessex. The Danelaw with English Mercia again fronted the West-Saxon king, as it had fronted him when Guthrum marched to complete the work of the northmen by the reduction of southern Britain; and it was now organized into a single political body, owning the rule of Eadgar, "king," as he called himself, "of the Mercians," or "of the Engle."[2] Eadgar showed his independence by recalling Dunstan from exile, and appointing him in full Witenagemot to the successive sees of Worcester and of London.[3] Eadwig, on the other hand, lay isolated in Wessex, and was driven even there to submit to the forces of revolt. In the spring of 958 Odo ended the strife between the Church and the king by gathering an armed band, riding to the hall where the queen was dwelling, seizing her, and carrying her out of the realm. The blow seems to have been followed by a threat of deposition, and Eadwig at last sub-

[1] "Sicque, universo populo testante, res regum diffinitione sagacium sejuncta est, ut famosum flumen Tamesis regnum disterminat amborum." Sax. Biog. sec. 24.

[2] In the first of Eadgar's charters of this date (Cod. Dip. 471), one of 958, attested by the bishops of Dorchester, Lichfield, Hereford, Lindsey, and Worcester, he styles himself "Rex Anglorum." In the second, of 959, he is "Rex Merciorum." (Cod. Dip. 480.)

[3] As Dunstan was consecrated by Odo, he must have returned before June, 958.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-958.

mitted to the archbishop's sentence.[1] From that moment he remained powerless in the hands of Odo and of his grandmother, Eadgifu, who returned to court, where she no doubt again resumed her power,[2] and after the archbishop's death must have acted as sole ruler. In 959 however the death of the boy-king of Wessex put an end to the outer seeming of disunion. The king of Mercia was received as their king by the West-Saxons; and the unity of the monarchy was again restored under the rule of Eadgar.

The West-Saxon ealdormen.

The first measures of the government however showed how utterly it lay in the hands of the great ealdormen of East-Anglia and Mercia, whose co-operation had placed Eadgar on the throne. Their aid had to be paid for; and the payment they chose was the extension of ealdormanries over the last remaining part of Britain, over Wessex itself. From Ecgberht's day at least Wessex had been divided into shires, with an ealdorman and shire-reeve at the head of each; but the natural configuration of the ground, as well as the course of history, had gathered these shires into

[1] The life of Oswald, by a Ramsey monk (in Raine, "Hist. Ch. of York," vol. i.), written between 995 and 1005, gives the earliest detailed account of this. "Antistes (Odo) . . . repente cum sociis equum ascendit, et ad villam quâ mulier mansitabat pervenit eamque rapuit et de regno perduxit, regemque dulcibus ammonuit verbis pariterque factis, ut ab impiis actibus custodiret se, ne periret de via justa." This is probably from the information of Oswald, Odo's nephew, and disposes of the later stories of Osbern and Eadmer.

[2] A charter, attested by Odo and Eadgifu (Cod. Dip. 1224) shows their return to court; and as Odo seems to have died in June, 958 (Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunst." Intro. xcv.), the reconciliation must have been early in the year.

CHAP. VII.

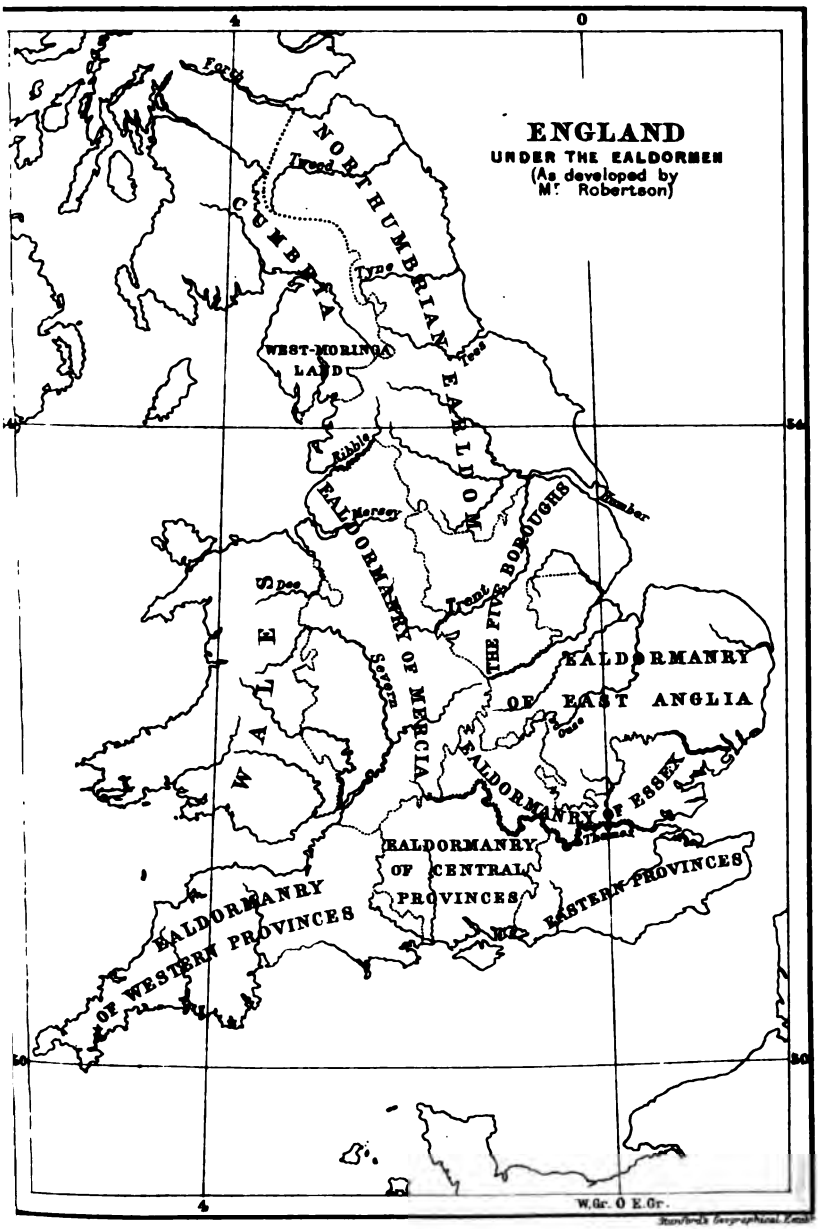
The Great Ealdormen.

955-958.

three great groups: those of the "Central Provinces," or the "shires about Winchester," those of the old Eastern or Kentish kingdom, and those of the Wealhcyn beyond Selwood in the west. These traditional divisions were taken as the basis of a new organization. Ælfhere was now, as he remained throughout the reign [1] the main power at the young king's court; and immediately on Eadgar's accession to the West-Saxon throne, indeed before the close of the year, the Mercian ealdorman received his reward in the raising of his brother Ælfheah to the ealdormanry of Central Wessex, the ealdormanry—as it is sometimes called—of Southampton; while about 966 the East-Anglian ealdorman, Æthelwine, exacted a like return in the elevation of Ordgar [2] to the ealdormanry of the Wealhcyn. Ordgar

[1] Throughout the numerous charters of Eadgar's reign the order of signature in the attestations is mainly the same. From beginning to end almost, Ælfhere and his brother Ælfheah sign first: then the ealdormen of the East-Anglian house, Æthelstan and Æthelwold: then Byrhtnoth, perhaps ealdorman of Essex: then the "duces" Eadmund and Æthelmund. In 962 the place of Æthelwold (who dies then) is taken by his brother Æthelwine. In 963 (Cod. Dip. 504) we find the first signature of Oslac as "dux," though the Chronicle places his elevation to the Northumbrian earldom in 966. From 966 we find Ordgar appearing among the duces: perhaps raised as father-in-law of Eadgar, who married in 965 his daughter Ælfthryth (Eng. Chron. a. 965). In 969 Eadwulf and Bryhtferth (who has till now stood at the head of the "ministri") are added to the number of "duces," and in 975 we have a "dux Ælfsige." Ælfheah and Ordgar seem to have died during Eadgar's reign, as their signatures are missing in the later charters.

[2] Ordgar was the father of Ælfthryth, the wife of Æthelwine's brother, Æthelwold, who had died in 962.



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The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

and Ælfheah were both of the royal kin, both had stood foremost in the group of nobles about Eadwig;[1] and their rise may have been due not only to the influence of their kinsmen, but to their own desertion of Eadwig's cause. Only the "eastern kingdom" was left without an ealdorman, perhaps from Dunstan's reluctance to set a great noble over Kent, where the primate was supreme.

The Primate and King.

With these earlier measures of the reign Dunstan however can have had little to do; for soon after the first settlement of the realm he became Archbishop of Canterbury,[2] and at once made his way to Rome, where he received his pallium at the hands of Pope John the Twelfth. It was only on his return in 960 that he seems to have taken the main direction of affairs. His policy was that of a cool, cautious churchman, intent not so much on outer aggrandizement as on the practical business of internal government. While withdrawing, save in the harmless arrogance of royal titles, from any effort to enforce the supremacy of Wessex over Welshmen or Cumbrians, and practically abandoning the bulk of England itself to the great nobles, the young king and the primate devoted themselves to the enforcement of order and justice in their own Wessex. In itself this union of archbishop and king in the government of the realm was of no small moment. The Church and the

[1] Ælfheah signs a charter of Eadwig in 955 (Cod. Dip. 436), Ordgar as late as 957 (Cod. Dip. 479).

[2] For the difficulties as to Odo's immediate successor see Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," Introd. xciii. The date of the archbishopric is 959; the entries in some chronicles under 961 being later interpolations. (Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," xcvi.)

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Monarchy were the two national powers which had been raised to a height above all others through the strife with heathendom and the Danes; and from the very outset of the strife in Ecgberht's days they had been drawn together as natural allies. But it was only at the close of the struggle that this natural alliance hardened into something like complete unity. Dunstan would seem to have contemplated the installation of the Archbishop of Canterbury as a constitutional and fixed adviser of the king, in the place of his own West-Saxon prelates: and though this plan was never quite realized, it left no slight mark on our later history. The displacement of the bishop of Winchester by the primate of Southern Britain as the national adviser of the Crown was at any rate a step forward in the process of developement which, even while the monarchy was weakening day by day, was showing the growth of a national sentiment. During this reign at least the plan was carried out. The rule of the realm was in the hands at once of Dunstan and Eadgar; and king and primate were almost blended together in the thoughts of Englishmen. So far indeed as their work could be distinguished, there was a curious inversion of parts. The king was seen devoting himself to the task of building up again the Church, of diffusing monasticism, of fashioning his realm in accordance with a religious ideal.[1] On the other hand the primate was busy

[1] Hence his praises from the monastic chroniclers of his own and later days. Thus Eng. Chron. (Peterborough) a. 959. "He upreared God's glory wide, and loved God's law. He was wide throughout nations greatly honoured, because he honoured

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

with the task of civil administration; and if he dealt with the Church at all, dealt with it mainly as a political power to be utilized for the support of the monarchy. But in fact it is hardly possibly to distinguish between the work of the one and the work of the other. If we read the accounts of the hagiologists, all is done by Dunstan and we see nothing of Eadgar. If we trust to the scanty records of the Chronicle, Dunstan is unheard of, and the glory of the reign is wholly due to Eadgar. The contemporary charters supply the explanation of the seeming inconsistency; they show, so far as their evidence goes, that the work was one; but that its oneness was the result of a common and unbroken action of the primate and the king.

Eadgar.

In the earlier years of Eadgar, however, the action of Dunstan must have been far the weightier of the two, for the king was but a boy of sixteen at his accession. It was not indeed till 966, when he had fully reached manhood, that we can trace the individual action of Eadgar himself in English affairs. The young king was of short stature and slender frame, but active and bold in temper;[1] and the legendary poetry which gathered round his name suggests that as he grew to manhood there was at least an interval in his reign which saw an outbreak of lawless passion, if not of tyranny. He must

God's name earnestly, and God's law pondered oft and frequently, and God's glory reared wide and far, and wisely counselled most oft and ever for God and for the world."

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. p. 251, "staturæ et corpulentiæ perexilis."

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988

have been married at an early age to Æthelflæd the White, who became the mother of a boy, his successor, Eadward the Martyr; for already in 965 her death had left him free to wed another wife, Ælfthryth, the mother of a second son, Æthelred.[1] It is before the latter marriage, in the years when he was only passing into manhood, that we must place the stories which have been saved from the poetry that gathered about his reign, such as that of the violation of a nun at Wilton,[2] stories which are mainly of interest as showing that popular tradition handed down a very different impression of Eadgar from that given by the monastic hagiographers, though they may possibly preserve a true record of the excesses of his youth. But if this temper ever existed it must have passed away with riper years. Dim as is our knowledge of the king, his progresses, his energy in the work of religious restoration, the civil organ-

[1] The Eng. Chron. (Worc.) a. 965, makes Ælfthryth "daughter of Ordgar the Ealdorman": Will. Malmesbury, "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. 255, makes Æthelflæd the daughter of an ealdorman, Ordmær.

[2] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. p. 252, &c., "primis temporibus fuisse crudelem in cives, libidinosum in virgines." Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontif." (ed. Hamilton), p. 190, represents Cnut as thinking Eadgar "vitiis deditus maximeque libidinis servus in subjectos propior tyranno fuisset." But the "vitiis" seem to be borrowed from the Chronicle a. 958, "one misdeed he did that he foreign vices loved," which is nothing but the common charge against his policy of union, like "heathen customs within the land he brought too oft, and outlandish men hither drew, and harmful folk allured to this land;" while the "cruelty" may be a popular rendering of the severity of his laws and of such acts as the harrying of Thanet.

ization which went on throughout his reign, the traces that remain of his rigorous justice, the union with Dunstan, above all the unbroken peace and order of the land, an order only possible at so early a time when the ruler's hand was felt everywhere throughout the realm, are more than enough to witness his devotion to the task of rule.

The public peace.

As we have said, it is impossible in the main acts of his reign to distinguish between the work of the king and the work of the primate. But it was to Eadgar and not to Dunstan that after tradition attributed the general character of his reign. A chronicler writing at the close of the Norman rule tells us that among Englishmen of his time there was a strong belief that in any fair judgement no English king of that or any other age could be compared with Eadgar.[1] The great characteristic of his rule was the characteristic of peace. At his birth Dunstan was said to have heard the voice of an angel proclaiming peace for England as long as the child should reign and Dunstan should live.[2] The prophecy, if it was ever uttered, was certainly fulfilled. "He dwelt in peace," says the chronicler, "the while that he lived. God so granted it him."[3] In the centuries before the Danish warfare there had

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. p. 256. "Merito ergo non infirma inter Anglos fama est nullum, nec ejus, nec superioris ætatis regem in Anglia recto et æquilibri judicio Edgaro comparandum."

[2] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), vol. i. p. 235. "Vulgatum est, quod, eo nascente, angelicam vocem Dunstanus exceperit, 'Pax Angliæ quamdiu puer iste regnaverit, et Dunstanus noster vixerit.'"

[3] Eng. Chron. a. 958.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

been constant strife either between the English states into which Britain was divided, or between the tribes that made up each separate state. For more than a hundred and fifty years the country had been a scene of fierce and brutal warfare between Englishman and Dane. The history of the new England had in fact been a series of troubles within, and then of troubles without. But with the accession of Eadgar foreign war and internal dissension seemed alike to cease. Within, he "bettered the public peace more than most of the kings who were before him in man's memory."[1] His rule over the dependent realms and ealdormanries was no doubt the more tranquil for the wise limitation of his claims to government or overlordship. "God him so helped that kings and earls gladly to him bowed and were submissive to that he willed, and without war he ruled all that himself would." Such a peace within and without was partly, as we have seen, the result of other men's labours, but in no small part it must have been the result of the wisdom and effort of Eadgar and Dunstan themselves. The chronicles tell us in significant words that the king "earned diligently" the peace in which he dwelt.

Outer quiet.

In his work of peace Eadgar was no doubt favoured by the state of things in the peoples about him. Danger from without lay mostly in the hostility of Scandinavia and of Normandy, or in the attacks of the Ostmen from Ireland. But master as Harald Blaatand was both of Denmark and Norway, and recently as his fleets had appeared in the British Channel,

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 958.

he was drawn from all thought of aggression in England during the whole reign of Eadgar by the stress of a warfare nearer home against Germany and Otto the Great.[1] Normandy again was entering upon a revolution conducive to English interests. Under Richard the Fearless her transformation from a pirate settlement of northmen into a Christian member of the French kingdom and the European commonwealth suddenly took a vigour it had never known before; and this transformation told in favour of peaceful relations with the states about her. The Ostmen, on the other hand, had turned, we know not why, from foes to friends, and a good understanding had been established between them and the English king which lasted till the conquest of the Norman. Though Olaf Sihtric's son, the old enemy of Æthelstan and Eadmund, reigned throughout Eadgar's days in Dublin, we possess coins of Eadgar's which were minted there, and it is possible that the Ostmen may have supplied him with the fleet that accompanied his progress through the Irish Channel.[2] Nearer home the English rule over Wales seems to have been quietly relaxed. Under Eadred four Welsh princes had sat in the English Witenagemot;[3] but with the reign of Eadgar their attendance ceases, and though a war in 968[4] may have forced them to

[1] Dahlmann, "Geschichte v. Dännemark," i. 79-83.

[2] Robertson, "Histor. Essays," p. 198. In his later years of rule in Northumbria, Olaf, Sihtric's son, seems to have been united to the English kings by their common opposition to the Danish Eric.

[3] Cod. Dip. 433.

[4] Annales Cambriæ, a. 968.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

renew the payment of tribute, their dependence on the Crown can have been little more than nominal.[1] In the north the settlement effected by Eadmund still held good, in spite of a raid into which the Scots seem to have been tempted by a last rising of the Danelaw.[2] The bribe of the Cumbrian realm sufficed to secure the Scot king as a fellow-worker with Eadgar as effectively as it had secured him as a fellow-worker with Eadmund, while a fresh bond was added by the cession during this reign of the fortress

[1] The legends of the twelfth century give a very different colour to these matters. Will. Malm., "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 251, says: "Judvalo regi Walensium edictum imposuerit ut sibi quotannis tributum trecentorum luporum pensitaret, quod cum tribus annis fecisset, quarto destitit, nullum se ulterius posse invenire professus." He has before told the story of the rowing on the Dee, which retains however more of its romantic form in the pages of his contemporary, Florence of Worcester, whose patriotic invention is now beginning to come into play. "Cum ingenti classe, septentrionali Britanniâ circumnavigatâ, ad Legionum civitatem appulit, cui subreguli ejus octo, Kynath scilicet rex Scottorum, Malcolm rex Cumbrorum, Maccus plurimarum rex insularum, et alii quinque, Dufnal, Siferth, Huwal, Jacob, Juchil, ut mandarat, occurrerunt, et quod sibi fideles et terrâ et mari cooperatores esse vellent juraverunt. Cum quibus die quâdam scapham ascendit, illisque ad remos locatis, ipse clavum gubernaculi arripiens, eam per cursum fluminis Deæ perite gubernavit, omnique turbâ ducum et procerum simili navigio comitante, a palatio ad monasterium S. Johannis Baptistæ navigavit, ubi factâ oratione eâdem pompâ ad palatium remeavit: quod dum intraret optimatibus fertur dixisse tunc demum quemque suorum successorum se gloriari posse regem Anglorum fore, cum tot regibus sibi obsequentibus potiretur pompâ talium honorum." Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), i. 142. Historically these legends stand on the same footing as the other romances embedded in Malmesbury.

[2] Pictish Chronicle, ad an. in Skene, "Celtic Scot."

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Isolation of the Danelaw.

of Edinburgh with the district around it along the southern shore of the Forth to the Scottish king.[1]

The Danelaw, the great Northumbrian Earldom which had been formed in Eadred's day under Oswulf and which passed in 966 into the hands of Earl Oslac,[2] as well as the territory of the Five Boroughs, had almost as little connexion with Eadgar as Cumbria or Scotland. Oslac, the Great Earl as he was called,[3] seems to have been nearly independent. We find him seldom sitting in the Witenagemot,[4] while the name of his predecessor, Oswulf, never appears in these great assemblies. The administrative independence of the Earldom indeed was formally recognized by Eadgar himself in the ordinance drawn up at Wilbarstone. The special aim of this ordinance was to create a uniform system of law; "with the English," says the king, "let that stand which I and my witan have added to the dooms of my forefathers for the behoof of all my people, only let the ordinance be common to all;" but he did not venture to carry the uniformity into Northumbria. "Let secular rights," he says, "stand among the Danes with as good laws as they best may choose."[5] The civil constitution of the Hundred indeed was the one reform that he invited them to share with the rest of England; "and this I desire, that this one doom be common to us all for security and peace among the people." They were just as independent in religious matters;

[1] Skene, "Celtic Scot." i. 365.

[2] Eng. Chron. (Worc.) a. 966. [3] Eng. Chron. a. 975.

[4] He signs some half-dozen of Eadgar's charters.

[5] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," vol. i. p. 273.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-958.

while celibacy in priesthood became the law of the south, the Northumbrian law ran, "If a priest forsake a woman and take another, let him be excommunicated."[1] But severed as it seemed politically from the general body of the English realm, the Danelaw was being drawn more and more into unity with the national life, and under Earl Oslac the fusion of the Danes with the mass of Englishmen among whom they had settled went quietly on.

Eadgar and the Danes.

From the first moment of his settlement in the Danelaw, indeed, the Dane had been passing into an Englishman. The settlers were few; they were scattered among a large population; in tongue, in manner, in institutions there was little to distinguish them from the men among whom they dwelt.[2] Moreover

[1] Stubbs however points out that "the few customs which the Danes and the Danelaga specially retained are enumerated by Cnut, and seem to be only nominally at variance with those of their neighbours; while of the exercise of separate legislation there is no evidence." ("Const. Hist." i. 226.)

[2] "Nothing is known of their native institutions at the time of their first inroads; and the differences between the customs of the Danelaga and those of the rest of England which follow the Norse occupation are small in themselves and might almost with equal certainty be ascribed to the distinction between Angle and Saxon" (Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 227). "The civilisation which the Danes possessed was probably about equal to that which the Angles had three centuries before; they were still heathens, and of their legal customs we know no more than that they used the universal customs of compurgation, wergild, and other pecuniary compositions for the breach of the peace. Their heathenism they renounced with hardly a struggle, and the rest of their jurisprudence needed only to be translated into English; the 'lah-slit' of the Danes is the 'wite' of the Anglo-Saxon; and in many cases new names rather than new

their national temper helped on the process of assimilation. Even in France, where difference of language and difference of custom seemed to interpose an impassable barrier between the northman settled in Normandy and his neighbours, he was fast becoming a Frenchman. In England, where no such barriers existed, the assimilation was yet quicker. The two peoples soon became confounded. In a few years a northman in blood was Archbishop of Canterbury, and another northman in blood was Archbishop of York.[1] That this fusion was furthered by the direct efforts of Eadgar is certain, even from the charges which are brought against him on this score. His laws show that he preserved to the conquered Danelaw its local institutions and local usages; but he did more than this. He freely recognized the northern settlers as Englishmen. He employed Danes in the royal service and promoted them to high posts in Church and State.[2] Such a policy had to be wrought out in the face of no slight opposition. Even in the eulogy which the chronicler passes upon

customs date from the Danish occupation; the eorl, the hold, the grith, the tithing, the wapentake perhaps, supersede the old names, but with no perceptible difference of meaning." *Ibid.* 228.

[1] The Archbishops Odo and Oswald. Raine's "Lives of Arch. of York," vol. i. p. 118. See also the large number of Danish or Norse names, Frena, Frithegist, Thurcytel, etc., which occur in the list of witnesses to a charter of Eadgar to the monastery of Ely. Hist. Elien. Gale, "Rerum Ang. Script." iii. p. 517. (A. S. G.)

[2] Thus Thored, Gunnar's son, was in 961 "præpositus domus nostræ," and later sent at the head of a royal force into Westmoringaland. Eng. Chron. (Winchester) a. 966.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Eadgar[1] the English discontent breaks out in censure of this policy of reconciliation. "One misdeed he did all too much that he foreign vices loved, and heathen customs within this land brought too oft, and outlandish men hither drew, and harmful people allured to this land." Echoes of the same discontent meet us in the later gossip of Malmesbury[2] how "as his fame flew through every mouth, foreigners, Saxons,[3] men of Flanders, even Danes themselves sailed hither in crowds, and were welcomed by Eadgar, whose arrival brought with it great harm to the men of the land, men who were up to this time without offence in such matters, and inclined in the simplicity of their own nature rather to hold to their own than to admire foreign matters, but who now learned from the Saxons an uncivilized fierceness of temper, from the Flamands a loose bodily self-indulgence, and from the Danes drunkenness."

The agricultural society.

That the new Danish influence contributed nobler elements than these to the national life was seen a little later in the developement which English commerce owed to the new settlers. As yet, however, the main industry of the country was agricultural. The system of culture indeed had changed little, if at all, since the days of the English settlement in Britain.[4] The township still shared the allotments in

[1] Eng. Chron. (Peterborough) a. 959.

[2] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 236.

[3] This may have come from his connexion with the Imperial house. Otto the Great "mira illi munera devexit et cum eo pactum firmissimæ pacis firmavit," says Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), i. 139.

[4] Kemble ("Sax. in Engl." i. 112, and note) thinks that 'England at the close of the tenth century had advanced to a

its "common field," while its herds and flocks browsed on the common pasture. But the changes in the social economy which had been going on during the long period of the Danish wars were producing a corresponding effect on industrial life. Whether from the circumstances of their original formation, or from the prevalence of commendation to a lord for purposes of protection, the bulk of English villages were now "in demesne," that is to say, in the "dominion" or lordship of some thegn, or bishop, or in that of the Crown itself. The free ceorl had all but vanished; he had for the most part died down into a dependent on the thegn; while the possessions of the nobles were widening into vast estates. The private estate of the lord lay in the midst of the common lands; and the bulk of the villagers held the parcels of private land that they too were acquiring by the tenure of service on this estate which was cultivated on the lord's behalf. As coin was scarce and hard to get, while labour was easy to give in its stead, the bulk of such tenants, or "villeins," as they were called, paid a customary rent in labour,[1] and resembled the small Irish farmer

high pitch of cultivation," and that "in some districts of England the Saxons may have had more land in cultivation than we ourselves at the beginning of George the Third's reign." The amounts paid for rental and dues seem to show that land was valuable and hard to get.

[1] At the same time we note, both in the laws, and in the accounts of rentals, or heriots, a steady growth of money payments. The amount of coin seems to have been steadily increasing; the repeated regulations as to moneyers indicate a growing demand for it; while there was a large supply of the precious metals, especially of gold, in the country in the form of ornaments and utensils. See Lingard, "Anglo-Sax. Church," ii.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988

who ekes out his living by work on other men's land. But there were a few villeins who simply held their land by a fixed money rent,[1] like a modern farmer; and there were others, the "boors," who seem to have had no land of their own, but worked on the lord's private land like the labourers of to-day. As a rule the villein could not leave his holding; but if he could not leave, so he could not be driven from it as long as his dues were paid; and if custom fixed the labour-rent without his will, it took in return no thought of the lord's will in the matter. The colibert or sokeman[2] might even go, if he would, though leaving of course his land behind him to fall into his lord's hands.

Customary dues.

Custom indeed, rather than any rise or fall of the market, ruled the price of labour as well as the rental of land; and in every demesne usage dictated alike the due of lord and of serf. The hay-ward, who watched over the common pasture when inclosed for grass-growing, was paid by a piece of cornland at its side. The wood-ward, who watched the forest, could claim every tree that the wind blew down.[3] The hog-ward, who drove the swine to the "denes" in the woodland, paid his lord fifteen pigs at the slaughter-time, and was himself paid by the increase of the herd. The bee-ward received his dues from the store of honey—a store which before the intro-

441, 442; and for instances of larger payments in coin, *ib.* i. 443.

[1] The "censuarii" of Domesday.

[2] "Rectitudines singularum personarum." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 441.

[3] *Ibid.*

duction of sugar was as needful for household purposes as it was indispensable for the brewery.[1] The services rendered for rent were of the most various kinds. To ride in the lord's train, to go at the lord's bidding wherever he might will, to keep "head-ward" over the manor at nightfall, or horse-ward over its common field, to hedge and ditch about the demesne, or to help in the chase and make the "deer-hedge," were tenures by which the villagers held their lands, as well as by labour on the lord's land one day a week throughout the year, and a month's toil in harvest-tide.[2]

Labour-rents.

The labour-roll of two manors will best enable us to realize what these services really were. At Hurstbourn, in Ælfred's day, each hide paid forty pence to the lord at autumn-tide, and he received from the manor six church-mittan of ale and three horse-loads of white wheat with two ewes and lambs at Easter. His men had out of their own time to plough three acres of the demesne, and sow them with their own seed, to mow half an acre of the rent-meadow, and split four loads of wood for the rent-hedging. Besides this they were to do any work that might be called for from them in every week save three in the year.[3] At Dyddenham in the Severn valley the lord's men had a less easy life. "At Dyddenham," runs its labour-roll, "the services are very heavy. The geneat

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," 437. At the head of the servants, in social rank, stood the smith, next to him the ploughman, after him the oxherd and cowherd, shepherd, goatherd, and swineherd, all in places of trust.

[2] *Ibid.* 433.

[3] Kemble, "Sax. in Engl." i. 321.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

must work, on the land and off the land, as he is bidden, and ride and carry, lead load, and drive drove, and do many things besides. The gebur must do his rights: he must plough half an acre for week-work; and himself pay the seed in good condition into the lord's barn for church-shot, at all events from his own barn; towards werbold,[1] forty large trees or one load of rods; or eight geocu build,[2] three ebban close; of field enclosure fifteen rods, or let him ditch fifteen; and let him ditch one rod of burg-enclosure; reap an acre and a half, mow half an acre; work at other works ever according to their nature. Let him pay sixpence after Easter, half a sester of honey at Lammas, six sesters of malt at Martinmas, one clew of good net yarn. In the same land it is customary that he who hath seven swine shall give three, and so forth always the tenth, and nevertheless pay for common of masting if mast there be."[3]

Manor of Cranborne.

In the same way the survey of a single manor will best bring before us the new rural society. That of Cranborne was one of the most extensive in Dorset: it stretched over ten thousand acres, of which nearly six thousand remained woodland, while three thousand furnished a rough common pasturage.[4] The land actually under cultivation was then but some twelve hundred acres of ploughland with twenty of meadowland, and its population numbered some forty males.

[1] Construction of weir or place for catching fish. (Kemble.)

[2] Let him build eight *yokes* in the weir, and close three ebban. What these geocu and ebban are I cannot say. (Kemble.)

[3] Cod. Dip. 461.

[4] Eyton, "Dorset Domesday," 62.

The manor was a royal manor: two-fifths of its whole area remained "in demesne," and in the ordinary cultivation of this two ox-teams of eight oxen each and ten serfs were commonly employed. The serfs of the demesne were strictly serfs; at Cranborne they formed about a fourth of the whole population, elsewhere through Dorset they numbered from an eighth to a thirtieth. But at harvest-tide and on given days through week and year the lord called for additional service in his demesne from the villeins who held by this labour-tenure the other three-fifths of the estate. Of these eight were villeins, twelve boors, and seven cottars, who seem to have been distinguished from their fellow-villeins simply by their smaller holdings.[1]

Slaves.

Though the villein was not free in a political sense, though he had no share in the general citizenship, and his lord "stood for him" in hundred-moot or shire-moot, he was in a social sense practically as free as the common peasant of to-day. But beneath the serf or villein lay the actual slave,[2] the "theow," who passed in the sale of an estate with its sheep and oxen and swine, and who was bought and sold as freely. "Herein is declared," runs the record of such a sale, "that Ediwic, the widow of Sæwgels, bought Gladu at Colewin for half-a-pound, for the price and the toll; and Ælword the port-gerefa took the toll." The toll on slave-sales formed one of the most lucrative of the market dues. At Lewes the reeve levied a farthing on every sale of an ox, but fourpence on

[1] Eyton, "Dorset Domesday," 45 et seq.
[2] See "Making of England," p. 192.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955.
966.

the sale of a man.[1] The position of the slave indeed had been greatly ameliorated by the efforts of the Church. Archbishop Theodore had denied Christian burial to the kidnapper, and prohibited the sale of children by their parents, after the age of seven. Ecgberht of York punished any sale of child or kinsfolk with excommunication. Ine freed any slave whom his lord forced to work on Sundays.[2] The murder of a slave by lord or mistress, though no crime in the eye of the State, became a sin for which penance was due to the Church. The slave was entitled to his two loaves a day, he was exempted from toil on Sundays and holydays: here and there he became attached to the soil and could only be sold with it; sometimes he acquired a plot of ground, and was suffered to purchase his own release.[3] Æthelstan gave the slave-class a new rank in the realm by extending to it the same principles of mutual responsibility for crime which were the basis of order among the free. The Church was far from contenting herself with this gradual elevation; Wilfrid led the way in the work of emancipation by freeing two hundred and fifty serfs whom he found attached to his estate at Selsey.

[1] Sharon Turner, "Hist. Angl.-Sax." iii. 79, 80.

[2] Ine, sec. 3; Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 105.

[3] "Non licet homini a servo tollere pecuniam quam ipse labore suo acquisierit" (Councils, iii. 202). "Thus Edric bought the perpetual freedom of Sægyfa, his daughter, and all her offspring. So, for one pound, Ælfwig the Red purchased his own liberty; and Sæwi Hagg bought out his two sons. Godwin the Pale is also notified to have liberated himself, his wife, and children, for fifteen shillings. Brihtmær bought the perpetual freedom of himself, his wife Ælfgyfu, their children and grandchildren, for two pounds." Sharon Turner, "Hist. Angl.-Sax." iii. 83.

Manumission became frequent in wills, as the clergy taught that such a gift was a boon to the soul of the dead. At the Synod of Chelsea the bishops bound themselves to free at their decease all serfs on their estates who had been reduced to serfdom by want or crime.[1] Usually the slave was set free before the altar or in the church-porch, and the Gospel-book bore written on its margins the record of his emancipation. Sometimes his lord placed him at the spot where four roads met, and bade him go whither he would. In the more solemn form of the law his master took him by the hand in full shire-meeting, showed him open road and door, and gave him the lance and sword of the freeman.

Inland trade.

It was this agricultural society that practically made up the nation. In the tenth century England could hardly claim to be a trading country at all. Its one export was that of slaves, its imports mainly of such goods as an agricultural people could not produce for itself. Its inland towns were mere villages that furnished markets for the sale of produce from the country round; wares from more distant points were few. The most important perhaps was salt, for as there was little winter-fodder for cattle, a large part of them were slain at the end of autumn, and salted meat formed the bulk of the food till the coming of spring. The saltworks of Worcestershire, which had been worked under the Romans, were still busy,[2] while the boundless supply of fuel from the

[1] Acts of Council of Celchyth, an. 816, cap. x. Stubbs and Haddan, "Councils," vol. iii. p. 583. On "Celchyth," see same vol. pp. 444, 445. (A. S. G.)

[2] Cod. Dip. 67, 68.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Andredsweald encouraged the making of sea-salt along the coast of Kent.[1] Salt-workers indeed were found along the whole southern shore. Metal wares also may here and there have made their way to market: for we find mention of an iron-mine as still being worked in Kent in the seventh century,[2] and in the ninth there were lead-works in the valley of the Severn.[3] The rest of the trade of the country was in the hands of the chapman or salesman who journeyed from hall to hall. His wares must often have been of the costliest kind. The growth of the noble class in power had been accompanied by a corresponding growth in wealth; and the luxury of their dress and personal ornaments is witnessed by every document of the time. The thegn himself boasted of his gems, of his golden bracelets and rings; his garments were gay with embroidery and lined with costly furs, the rough walls of his house were often hung with silken hangings, wrought with figures or pictures. We hear of tables made of silver and gold, of silver mirrors and candlesticks; while cups and basins of the same precious metals were stored in the hoards of the wealthier nobles.[4] To supply these costly goods as well as the meaner wares of lesser folk must have been the work of the chapman, and gave an importance to this class which

[1] Ecgberht makes a grant of salt-works here, with a hundred and twenty loads of wood from the weald to feed the fires. Another grant allows waggons to go for six weeks into the king's forest. Cod. Dip. 234, 288.

[2] Cod. Dip. 30.

[3] Cod. Dip. 237.

[4] See the numerous instance given by Sharon Turner, "Hist. Angl.-Sax." iii. cap. 5.

passed away as the customer learned to seek the trader instead of the trader making his way to the customer,[1] and the chapman died down into the pedlar.

Its difficulties.

It was seldom that the travelling merchant ventured to travel alone. In a law of Ælfred chapmen are bidden to "bring the men whom they take with them to folk-moot, and let it be stated how many of them there are, and let them take such men with them as they may be able afterwards to present for justice at the folk-moot; and when they have need of more men with them on their journey, let them declare it, as often as their need may be, to the king's reeve in presence of the gemot."[2] To move over the country indeed with costly wares was hardly safe at a time when ordinary travellers went in companies for security, and even the clergy on the way to synods were forced to travel together.[3] The highways in fact were infested with robbers, and the outlaw was, through the legal usages of the day, a frequent trouble on the road. The roads too were often rough and hardly traversable; the repair of ways and bridges, though an obligation binding on every landowner, was so often neglected, that the Church had to aid in the work by laying on her offenders the penance of "building bridges over deep waters and foul ways."[4]

[1] The chapman is first mentioned in the laws of Hlothere (Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 33), and in those of Ine (*ib.* p. 119). "If a chapman traffic up among the people, let him do it before witnesses."

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 83.

[3] Lingard, "Ang. Sax. Church," i. 107.

[4] *Ibid.* i. 336.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955.
959.

The gleeman.

The safety of travelling was perhaps hardly increased by the presence of other wanderers from hall to hall, who played almost as great a part in the domestic life of the wealthier class as the chapman himself. The visits of the gleeman and the juggler or "tumbler" were welcome breaks in the monotony of the thegn's life. It is hard not to look kindly at the gleeman, for he no doubt did much to preserve the older poetry which even now was ebbing away. When Christianity brought with it not only a new vehicle of writing in the Roman characters, but the habit of writing itself, it dealt a fatal blow at the mass of early poetry which had been handed down by oral tradition. Among the Franks Charles the Great vainly strove to save the old national songs from perishing by ordering them to be written down. In England Ælfred did what he could to save them by teaching them in his court. We see them indeed lingering in men's memories till the time of Dunstan. But the heathen character of the bulk of them must have hindered their preservation by transfer to writing, and custom hindered it yet more, for men could not believe that songs and annals handed down for ages by memory could be lost for want of memory. And no doubt the memory of the gleeman handed on this precious store of early verse long after the statelier poems of Cadmon or Cynewulf had been set down in writing. But useful as their work may have been, and popular as were both gleeman and tumbler,[1] the character of the class seems to have been low, and that of their stories is marked

[1] Eadgar himself speaks of them as "dancing and singing even to the middle of the night."

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Revival of learning.

by the repeated prohibition addressed to the clergy to listen to harpers or music, or permit any jesting or playing in their presence.

With learning indeed the stress of war had dealt roughly since the time of Ælfred. The educational effort which he had set on foot had all but ceased, for the clergy had sunk back into worldliness and ignorance; not a book or translation, save the continuation of the English chronicle, had been added to those which Ælfred had left, and the sudden interruption even of the chronicle after Eadward's reign shows the fatal effect which the long war was exerting on literature. Dunstan resumed Ælfred's task, not indeed in the wide and generous spirit of the king, but with the activity of a born administrator. It was the sense that the cause of education was the cause of religion itself that inspired Ælfred and Dunstan alike with their zeal for teaching. It was this too that gave its popular and vernacular character to the new literature. In Ælfric, a scholar of Æthelwold's school at Winchester,[1] we see the type of the religious and educational popularizer. He aids the raw teacher with an English grammar of Latin; he helps the unlearned priest by providing for him eighty English homilies in all as a course of teaching for the year; he assists Bishop Wulfwig and Archbishop Wulfstan by furnishing them with pastoral letters to their clergy. His homilies were so greedily read, that his admirers begged from him some English lives of the saints,

[1] Lingard, "Angl. Sax. Church," ii. 311 et seq.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

and the prayer of a friend, Æthelweard,[1] drew him into editing and writing an English version of the Bible, which, omitting such parts as he judged unedifying for the times, he carried on from Genesis to the book of Judges.

Chronicle of Worcester.

It was not only in religious writings that the followers of Dunstan carried on the work of literary revival. The historic impulse which had been given by Ælfred and had promised so great a future for our annals in the days of Eadward had died down under his successors. Of no reigns have we in fact more meagre particulars, so far as their military and political events are concerned, than of the reigns of Eadmund, Eadred, Eadwig, and Eadgar. The great Chronicle of Worcester seems to have remained suspended during this period, nor do we know of any other record which could have supplied its deficiency. But the intellectual activity of Dunstan's school could hardly fail in the end to fix upon a work so congenial as that of historical composition. To Dunstan himself we owe the life of Eadmund, the martyr-king of East-Anglia, since it was at his suggestion that Abbo, the most notable of the French scholars, was summoned from Fleury, and induced to undertake it. His great assistant, Æthelwold of Winchester, was possibly the author of the last continuation of the Chronicle of Winchester, the meagre and irregular annals from the death of Eadward the Elder to the death of Eadgar, which must have been put together in Eadward the Martyr's reign, and

[1] This Æthelweard was possibly the ealdorman of that name, whose chronicle has been mentioned. See p. 51, note 1. (A. S. G.)

whose defects their author strove to supply by interspersing them with the noble historic songs from Cyneheard's Song Book. Dunstan's other great helper, Oswald, unconscious both of Æthelwold's labours and of the nobler work of the annalist of the time of Eadward the Elder, seems to have taken a copy of the original chronicle of Ælfred to his church at Worcester, where the meagre jottings with which he linked it to the story of his own day became the beginning of a later chronicle which was afterwards to equal the literary excellence of that of Eadward.[1] The final cessation of Æthelwold's chronicle with the death of Eadgar transferred the centre of English historical literature from the Church of Winchester to that of Worcester; and it was Worcester which retained this historical supremacy till

[1] The beginning of consecutive annals in this Chronicle at 991 seems to fix its compilation (after working up the Chronicle of 887) at this date. Oswald died a year later, in 992, so that the work lies with him or his successor Bishop Aldulf (992-1002). Anyhow, the compiler—if the Peterborough Chronicle, as seems probable, accurately represents this Chronicle—knew only the Chronicle of 887 and was ignorant of the Eadwardian annals, the Gesta of Lady Æthelflæd and the continuation of Æthelwold. Consecutive entries do not begin till 991. This Chronicle is the first or lost Chronicle of Worcester, a work which we do not possess in its original form, but which luckily is still preserved to us almost entire in a copy made for Peterborough in the twelfth century—called the Peterborough Chronicle. In this early part, too, it is virtually copied by the extant Worcester Chronicle, first composed about 1016, and of which we have more to say hereafter; while the Chronicle of Florence of Worcester is a Latin translation of it made in the twelfth century with large additions, from whatever source they may be derived.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-958.

the middle of the twelfth century, from the days of Oswald and Æthelred to those of Henry the First. In no place was the historical tradition and the national sentiment cherished with greater tenacity, and we shall see how at a far later time, in the English revival after the Norman Conquest, this national sentiment passed through the Latin version of the Chronicle by Florence of Worcester, to mould the great school of Latin chroniclers which sprang up with William of Malmesbury. From the death of Eadgar to that of Cnut this Worcester Chronicle is the one glimmering light in the darkness of our history.[1]

Decline of monasticism.

The Danish wars had told as hardly on religion as on learning. We have already seen the strife which the Church had long been waging with the customs and traditions of Englishmen and the profound change which Christianity had worked and was still working in the national life. But in the course of the long struggle with the Danes the character of the Church itself had undergone radical modifications. English Christianity had, in its earlier days, been specially monastic. But the Danish strife had proved almost fatal to monasticism. The monasteries had been above all the points of attack; and throughout the Danelaw not a single religious house survived. What is more remarkable is the almost

[1] This is a most important point in its bearing on any real criticism of the history of this period. Of this one contemporary Chronicle the rest are only copies or versions of a later date; and the additions made to it by Florence of Worcester and writers of his time when uncorroborated by other evidence have no higher authority than any other historical traditions of the twelfth century.

complete disappearance of monastic life in English Mercia, and in Wessex itself. In Wessex indeed the temper of the people seems to have become so averse to it, that when Ælfred first undertook its revival, though he succeeded in drawing women to his nunneries at Hyde and at Shaftesbury, he was forced to send abroad for monks to fill his house at Athelney. Malmesbury indeed and Glastonbury still went on; but the latter at least had ceased, if we may judge from Dunstan's story, to preserve the character of a monastery under rule.[1] Its re-establishment under Dunstan's abbacy, and the refounding of Abingdon by Æthelwold, was all that had been done towards the revival of monasticism in the days of Eadred; and in neither case was the revival a complete one.[2] Both seem to have been as yet rather gatherings of clerks and schoolboys than abbeys in the stricter sense.

So great however had been the part which monasticism had played in our early religious history, that statesmen like Ælfred, as we have seen, regarded its restoration as a necessary part of the restoration of religion itself;[3] and this feeling was no doubt quick-

[1] Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," Introd. p. lxxxv.

[2] The "Life of Æthelwold" speaks of the "clerici de Glastoniâ" who accompanied him to Abingdon. It was not in fact till Eadgar's reign that one of these, Osgar, was sent to learn the Benedictine rule at Fleury. Vit. S. Æthelwoldi, App. to "Hist. Abingdon." ed. Stevenson, ii. 258, 259.

[3] "The movement, with all its drawbacks, was justifiable, perhaps absolutely necessary. . . . We cannot doubt that a monastic mission system was necessary for the recovery of middle England from the desolation and darkness which had been brought

CHAP VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-959.

ened by the view of the reformed Benedictinism which beginning at Cluny was now spreading over Flanders and France. The Cluniac reform had already stirred the zeal of English churchmen; Archbishop Odo had sent his nephew Oswald to study it at Fleury,[1] and Æthelwold, with a like purpose, sent to the same abbey one of his clerks from Abingdon.[2] It was only in 964 however that the reform penetrated into England itself. As Eadgar's marriage with Ælfthryth took place about this time, a marriage which connected him with the ealdormen of East-Anglia, who afterwards showed themselves earnest in their friendship for monks, it is possible that it was to his new queen's impulse that the king owed the zeal he showed from this moment in the diffusion of monasticism. It was with Eadgar's support that Æthelwold, who had been raised the year before to the see of Winchester, supplanted clerks by monks in his own cathedral church and carried the new Benedictinism over his diocese, as it was with the support of the East-Anglian ealdormen that he turned from thence into East-Anglia, and revived the great abbeys of the Fens. It was significant however of the unpopularity of the movement that no further extension took place till five years later, when Oswald, who had now become bishop of Worcester, introduced monks into his own

upon it by the Danes, or that the monastic revival was in those regions both successful and useful." (Stubbs, "Memorials of Dunstan," Introd. xcviii.)

[1] Vit. Oswaldi, Raine, "History of Church of York," i. 413.

[2] Vit. Æthelwoldi, Stevenson, "Hist. Abingdon," ii. 259.

cathedral city and its neighbourhood, and that Oswald ventured on no further foundations in his vast Mercian diocese, nor on the introduction of monasticism at all into his later arch-diocese of York. Northumbria, indeed, remained without a monastic house to the verge of the Norman Conquest. The Church itself gave the movement little countenance. Only two bishops took interest in it, and even Dunstan himself seems to have done little. His assent must have been given to its progress; but though he held the see of Canterbury for some twenty-seven years, he founded no Benedictine house in Kent, nor did he follow Æthelwold or Oswald in the introduction of monks into his church at Canterbury. Clerks indeed remained at Canterbury till the time of Archbishop Ælfric.[1]

The regular and secular clergy.

In spite therefore of the energy of the king, the monastic movement remained a local one. Tradition ascribed to Eadgar the foundation of forty monasteries; and though it would be hard to fill up the list, even if we attribute to him whatever work was done throughout his realm, it is certain that it

[1] Prof. Stubbs ("Memor. of Dunst." Introd. cxix.) shows that Oswald and Æthelwold were the chief actors in the dispossession of the "secular clerks who held monastic property"—that the general mass of the clergy were untouched—that all we know of Dunstan's part in the movement is "that he did not oppose it,"—that he left secular clerks at Canterbury, and that his ecclesiastical legislation contains nothing against clerical marriage. "It is the enforcement of monastic discipline, not the compulsory celibacy of the clergy, that is the object of the clerical reforms: and in this Dunstan only partly sympathized." (Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunstan," Introd. cxix.)

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

was to his time that English monasticism looked back in later days as the beginning of its continuous life. But after all his efforts, monasteries were only firmly planted in Wessex and East-Anglia; and there only by the personal efforts of king and ealdormen. In the Mercian ealdormanry there were only a few monasteries about Worcester. In the Northumbrian earldom there were none at all. Such a failure can hardly be attributable to the mere strife over questions of property which these foundations may have brought; it shows a want of zeal for the re-establishment of religious houses in the people at large. The system indeed no longer answered to the religious needs of the country. Even had the stricter rule which the reformers introduced allowed the new Benedictine houses to do the same work which had been carried on by the mission-preachers of the earlier monasteries, they were now not needed for it. Their place had been taken by the parish priest, and the influence of the monastic clergy had been superseded by the parochial organization of the Church. But while the Danish wars had been fatal to the monks—the "regular clergy" as they were called—they had also dealt heavy blows at the "seculars," or parish priests. The long strife had told as hardly on the learning and morals of the priesthood as on their wealth. The injunctions of synod and Witenagemot failed to enforce clerical celibacy. Their failure is written on the very face of the dooms themselves. "Let him who will abstain from concubinage with women," runs a doom of the time, "and preserve his chastity have God's mercy, and be

worthy besides for worldly honours of thegn-wer and thegn-right, both in life and in the grave; and he who will not do that which is befitting his order, let his work wane before God and before the world."[1] But the loss of social rights seems to have had little effect on the priesthood at large, while in the Danelaw clerical marriage appears to have been legally recognized.

The Great Ealdormen.

958-988.

The Bishops.

While it destroyed monasticism and ruined discipline in the lower clergy, the strife with the Danes had greatly raised the importance of the higher. In the war of religion the bishops had come to the front as warriors and as statesmen. In Wessex, at least from the time of Æthelwulf, we see them drawn into State employment, and politically linked with the court. The kings in fact seem to have seized on the episcopate as a force which might hold in check the provincial isolation and the independence of the ealdormen. The check was to some extent an efficient one, for as the ealdorman was the temporal lord of each under-kingdom, so the bishop was its spiritual lord, and in Witenagemot or shire-moot the two sat side by side as equal powers. It was probably with this view that the kings had so lavished wealth on the prelates—gifts and restorations of lands, wide grants of jurisdiction, military and judicial privileges: it was at any rate a distinct result of Dunstan's policy. An important political end was gained when he placed the choice of bishops in the hands of the Crown, and insured their fidelity by

[1] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 307. Laws of Æthelred. Cnut renews this doom.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

reserving to the Crown a power of deposition. And not only did the bishops thus become Crown nominees, but they were by that fact transferred as it were out of their own world into the political world. With the primacy of Dunstan separate ecclesiastical councils cease,[1] and the bishop's place is henceforth in the Witenagemot or in the royal council. The northern primate Dunstan tied to the southern throne by annexing to the see of York the southern see of Worcester, and this arrangement lasted to the Conquest. The rest of the bishops appear from this time in the light of great secular powers whose wealth and influence were at the disposal of the Crown, and the bulk of whom were among its regular councillors. It is indeed from Dunstan that we may date the beginnings of that political episcopate which remained so marked a feature of English history from this time to the Reformation.

Eadgar's rule.

The great ealdormanries in middle and eastern Britain can have had hardly more connexion with Eadgar's direct government than the earldom of the north. In Mercia, the independence of Ælfhere, the ealdorman or "Heretoga[2] of the Mercians," was probably little hampered by his acknowledgement of Eadgar's nominal supremacy, nor is it likely that the supremacy was less nominal over East-Anglia. What really held Britain together was not the power which the king exercized over the ealdormen, but

[1] Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 276.

[2] See grant of Oswald, Cod. Dip. 494, "with leave and witness of Eadgar, King of the Angles, and of Ælfhere, Heretoga of the Mercians."

The Great Ealdormen.

955-959.

the power which the ealdormen exercized over the king. Throughout Eadgar's reign, if we look, in the dearth of historic information, to the witness of the charters, Ælfhere and his brother Ælfheah stand at the head of the royal counsellors, and next to them stand the ealdormen of East-Anglia and the ealdorman of Essex.[1] The power of the Crown in fact was in the hands of these great nobles; and the cool judgement of king and primate was shown in their recognition of this fact, and in their abstinence from any useless struggle against it such as wrecked England under Æthelred. They restricted themselves to Wessex, and mainly to the work of furthering public order in Wessex. The laws of Eadgar[2] are brief, and chiefly devoted to the police of the realm, to developing the remedial jurisdiction of the king, securing the regular holding of the courts, organizing the country in its hundreds[3] for the suppression of crime and maintenance of the peace, and promoting uniformity in measures[4] and in the coinage.[5] The same purpose

[1] For Eadgar's reign our materials are of the scantiest. The chronicle breaks wholly down, and gives some half-dozen meagre entries for the entire reign; the information of Dunstan's biographers all but ceases with Eadgar's accession, and those of Æthelwold or Oswald add little but facts connected with the monastic movement. For the signatures to the charters, see *antea*, p. 316.

[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 258-279.

[3] The "Hundred" first appears by name under Eadgar. Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 259.

[4] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 237-8, tells how Dunstan ordered pegs to be inserted in all drinking cups that none might drink deep without knowing it.

[5] If we may trust later tradition, Eadgar issued a new coinage

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

of order may be seen in the ravaging of Thanet in 968,[1] as a punishment for the practice of wreckage among its inhabitants, and in an extension of the royal progresses which after-tradition associated with the reign of Eadgar. "Every summer," says Malmesbury,[2] "immediately after the close of the Easter Festival," which was kept at Winchester, "Eadgar used to order ships to be gathered together along every shore, since his wont was to voyage with the eastern fleet as far as the western side of the island, and on its return home to proceed with the western fleet as far as the north, and from thence to return with the northern fleet to the eastern coast." The object of this cruise was to sweep the sea of pirates. "In winter and spring," on the other hand, that is when his home progress would least interfere with the culture of the land, "he rode through every shire, inquiring into the law-dooms of the powerful men, and showing himself a severe avenger of any wrong done in the name of justice."

Death of Eadgar.

We need not accept every detail of this story, but it may be taken as showing the existence of an organized system of judicial and administrative progresses at this time, as well as the continuance of the naval system which had begun under Ælfred. It was indeed with work such as this that Eadgar seems to have been mainly occupied throughout his reign. Of political measures we see hardly a trace. By the union of the sees of Worcester and York under a single prelate, Dunstan probably purposed to get a

in 975, as the old had become so clipped as to have lost its standard weight. Matt. Paris, "Chron. Maj." a. 975. (A. S. G.)

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 968. [2] "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 252.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-958.

new hold upon the north; and it may be that a more distinctly political aim is seen in the coronation of Eadgar at Bath in 973,[1] when the two primates united in setting on the head of Eadgar what may have been a distinctively national crown.[2] But if the ceremony was meant as a prelude to any effort for the restoration of the royal power, its purpose was foiled by Eadgar's death only two years after.[3] His death was a signal for the completion of the work of political disintegration. Till now the great ealdormen had contented themselves with detaching their own ealdormanries from the Crown, and limiting its actual rule to Wessex, while they controlled its action by their united influence. But this influence was now to be broken by strife among themselves, and by a rivalry for power over the Crown

[1] The fact of this coronation alone is given by the contemporary Chronicle: Oswald's biographer (about A.D. 1000) seems to look on it as one of the common "wearings of the crown," but gives in his verbose way (Vit. Oswaldi, Raine, "Histor. of Ch. of York," i. 437) a full description of the ceremony, with the coronation oath; at the Conquest, Osbern, and Gotselin in his life of S. Edith, connect it with the close of a penance of seven years laid on Eadgar for his violation of a nun. See Stubbs, "Memor. of Dunst." Introd. p. xcix.—ci., who evidently leans to Robertson's opinion ("Hist. Essays," pp. 203-215) that the coronation "was a solemn typical enunciation of the consummation of English unity, an inauguration of the king of all the nations of England, celebrated by the two archbishops, possibly with special instructions or recognition from Rome, possibly in imitation of the imperial consecration of Edgar's kinsmen, the first and second Otto, possibly as a declaration of the imperial character of the English crown itself." For myself, I cannot think the facts sufficient to support this very tempting theory.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 973.

[3] Eng. Chron. a. 975.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955. 988.

itself. Eadgar had hardly reached middle age when he died in 975,[1] and the children he had left were both mere boys, for Eadward can scarcely have been more than thirteen, or Æthelred more than seven. The accession of a child-king left the royal power in the hands of any great noble or prelate who could control the court, and the opportunity stirred to life the ambition of the two great ealdormen who divided Mid-Britain between them.

Disputed succession.

Their jealousy of one another had placed the Mercian ealdorman Ælfhere at the head of an anti-monastic party, while Æthelwine of East-Anglia, with his maternal uncle Birhtnoth of Essex, stood at the head of a monastic; and on Eadgar's death Ælfhere immediately restored the seculars to the churches in his ealdormanry from which they had been driven,[2] while Æthelwine gathered an army in East-Anglia to defend the cause of the monks.[3] The monastic question, however, was a mere side issue. The main aim of each of the rivals was to secure the king, and their quarrel at once took the form of a dispute over the succession. Æthelwine, himself the brother of the first husband of Eadgar's queen, supported the claims of her child Æthelred, which were backed by the boy's mother and the whole monastic party. On the other hand, Eadward was as vigorously supported by Ælfhere. Civil war was, in fact, only averted by the resolute action of the minister who still held Wessex in his grasp. The will of Eadgar, which named Eadward as his

[1] He was only thirty-two. See Eng. Chron. a. 973.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 975.

[3] Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), i. 144.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

successor, must have been drawn up under Dunstan's counsel, and the rising of Æthelwine was in fact a rising against Dunstan's influence. His influence, as we shall see, was still dominant with Eadward, while under Æthelred it would have been at once set aside, as it was in fact set aside as soon as his reign began. Dunstan therefore threw himself on the side of Ælfhere, and he was joined by his fellow-primate; for if the monastic party backed Æthelwine, its head, Archbishop Oswald, showed himself greater than his party. The constitutional precedent which Dunstan had set in the coronation at Bath was now resolutely turned to use. As the representatives of northern and southern England the two primates had but two years before set the crown of all England on the brow of Eadgar; they now settled the question of the dispute over the succession by setting the crown on the head of Eadward.[1]

Eadward the Martyr.

The reign of the young king however was a short and troubled one, and a famine which immediately followed his accession no doubt increased the troubles.[2] A stormy Witenagemot in 977, at Kirtlington, was followed by a second as stormy meeting at Calne, in 978, where "all the chief Witan fell from an upper chamber save the holy Archbishop Dunstan, who alone supported himself on a beam."[3] The anxiety of the later hagiographers[4] to represent the strife in these meet-

[1] Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), i. 145. Eng. Chron. a. 975.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 975. [3] Eng. Chron. a. 977, 978.

[4] The biographies of Dunstan, which are almost our sole materials for this time, make the whole history turn on a struggle about the monks, in which Æthelwine is the head of the

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

ings as mainly concerned with the monastic question has effectually distorted its real character. What we may dimly see on Dunstan's part is an effort throughout to save the Crown from the domination of the nobles. The opponents of Eadward had professed to base their opposition on fear of "the harsh temper with which he was wont to punish the outrages of those of his court;"[1] they dreaded that he would "govern by his own unbridled will,"[2] that he would be, in a word, what they afterwards called Æthelred,—a king 'redeless' or uncounselled. In the fear thus expressed lay the germ of the rising contest between the great nobles and the Crown which was to lay England in a few years at the feet of the Danes. We may see, perhaps, the purpose of the primate to assert the supremacy of the king in the banishment of Earl Oslac of Deira,[3] a banishment which enabled Dunstan to unite Deira and Bernicia under Waltheof, a ruler probably of Oswulf's house and so of English

monastic, and Ælfhere of the anti-monastic party, while Dunstan is represented as persecuted on account of his monastic sympathies. All this however is wholly inconsistent with the attitude of Oswald, who was undoubtedly the leader of the monastic party, and who yet crowns Eadward in the teeth of Æthelwine, and above all with the attitude of Dunstan himself, who throughout Eadward's reign is supported by the anti-monastic Ælfhere and opposed by Æthelwine and the monastic party, while on the accession of Æthelred he is actually driven from power by the latter.

[1] Eadmer, "Life of Dunstan," sec. 35.

[2] Osbern, sec. 37.

[3] See the poem in English Chron. a. 975, which "seems to connect this step," says Mr. Freeman, "with the predominance of Ælfhere and the anti-monastic party."

blood, as well as an ancestor of notable men. But the banishment is memorable in itself as the first of a series of such measures by which the Crown from this time struck at the growing power of the earls and ealdormen.

Murder of Eadward.

In the actual struggle between the rival parties Dunstan, it may be gathered, played to some extent the part of mediator, but his tendency as the upholder and minister of Eadward must have swayed him to the side of Ælfhere, whose support of the king continued to the end of his reign; while the party of the East-Anglian ealdormen were, as we see from the revolution which followed, opponents of Eadward, and with Eadward of Dunstan.[1] The struggle was, in fact, cut short by the young king's murder.[2] Eadward was slain at Corfe soon after the council of Calne,[3] but of the circumstances of the murder we know nothing with certainty. Of its authors we can have little doubt. The party which had failed to set Æthelred on the throne four years before, now

[1] It would appear that the monks were less powerful under Eadward than under Eadgar. This and the predominance of the monastic party under Æthelred may perhaps account for Osbern's sneer at Æthelred as "monk rather than warrior."

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 979. According to the later story of William of Malmesbury, Eadward was returning home alone from the chase when his stepmother, Ælfthryth, caused him to be stabbed by a servant while he was drinking from the cup which she had handed to him. In spite of his wound he spurred his horse forward to join his companions, but one foot slipping, he was dragged by the other through the winding paths, till his death was made known to his followers by the tracks of blood. Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), pp. 258, 259. (A. S. G.)

[3] The great council of 977 at Kirtlington, the second at Calne in 978, were closely followed by the assassination.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

removed from his path the king whom Dunstan had set there. It was they who profited by the blow. Dunstan withdrew powerless to Canterbury after the coronation of Æthelred, who was still but ten years old,[1] and left the realm to the government of the king's mother and her kinsmen, Æthelwine and Brihtnoth. The new rulers made little effort to hide their part in the deed, for Eadward was buried at Wareham without the pomp that befitted a king's burial, and no vengeance was sought for his murder. "His kinsmen," the chronicle says bitterly, "would not avenge him." But the pitifulness which has ever underlain the stern temper of Englishmen awoke at the thought of the murdered youth who lay unavenged in the grave to which he had been hurried. He was counted a martyr, and in the year which followed his death Ealdorman Ælfhere was strengthened by the popular sympathy to show his devotion to the king whose policy he had doubtless directed by fetching

[1] See Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (ed. Hardy), i. 257. The crowning was at Kingston, and we still possess the coronation oath that Dunstan exacted. "This writing is copied, letter for letter, from the writing which Archbishop Dunstan delivered to our lord at Kingston on the very day when he was consecrated King, and he forbad him to give any other pledge but this pledge, which he laid upon Christ's altar, as the bishop instructed him: 'In the name of the Holy Trinity, three things do I promise to this Christian people, my subjects: first, that I will hold God's Church and all the Christian people of my realm in true peace; second, that I will forbid all rapine and injustice to men of all conditions; third, that I promise and enjoin justice and mercy in all judgments, whereby the just and merciful God may give us all His eternal favour, who liveth and reigneth.'"—Kemble, "Sax. in Eng." ii. 35, 36, note.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

Death of Dunstan.

Eadward's bones from Wareham and burying them with much worship at Shaftesbury.[1]

The new burial was followed by a burst of pity which forced even Æthelwine and the court to a show of reverence. "They that would not bow afore to his living body now bow humbly on knees to his dead bones."[2] But foully as it had been won, the power was now in the hands of the two eastern ealdormen, and for a time all went well. During the eleven years from 979 to 990, when the young king reached manhood, there is hardly any internal history to record. Danish and Norwegian pirates indeed appeared at the opening of this period at Southampton, Chester, Cornwall, and Portland, but though their presence shows a loss of that hold on the seas which Eadgar and Dunstan had so jealously maintained, they were probably driven off by the English fleet. The hostility of the ealdormen and their boy-king was directed rather against internal foes, against Dunstan and Ælfhere. That Ælfhere was strong enough to oppose them was shown by his solemn translation of Eadward's bones; but three years later they were freed from all rivalry by his death,[3] for though his son Ælfric followed him as ealdorman of Mercia, his opponents succeeded in driving him into exile in 985, and in putting an end for the time to his ealdordom.[4] The archbishop, who had withdrawn to Canterbury, was roused from his retirement by a quarrel of the king's councillors with the see of Rochester, in which the lands of that bishopric, dependent as it was on the

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 980.
[2] Eng. Chron. a. 979.
[3] Eng. Chron. a. 983.
[4] Eng. Chron. a. 985.

CHAP. VII.

The Great Ealdormen.

955-988.

primate's see, were ravaged by the young king's order.[1] Dunstan was still powerful enough to awe the government by a threat of excommunication, but in 988 the last check which his existence had enforced on the ealdormen was removed, and the wild wailing with which the crowds who filled the streets of Canterbury hailed the archbishop's death showed their prevision of the ills which were to fall on the England that had been wrested by one ill deed from his grasp.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 986.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DANISH CONQUEST.

988—1016.

The social revolution.

WE have followed the course of the political and administrative changes which had been brought upon England by the coming of the Danes, and have seen how changes even more important had been brought about in the structure of society; though in the one case as in the other the result of Danish presence was not so much any direct modification of English life, as the furtherance and hastening forward of a process of natural developement. It was indeed the break-up of the old social organization that united with the political disintegration of the country to reduce it to the state of weakness which startles us at the close of Eadgar's days,[1] and it is in the degradation of the class in

[1] "Towards the closing period of the Anglo-Saxon polity I should imagine that nearly every acre of land in England had become boc-land; and that as a consequence of this the condition of the free-man became depressed, while the estates of the lords increased in number and extent. In this way the ceorlas or free cultivators gradually vanished, yielding to the ever-growing force of the nobler class, accepting a dependent position upon their boc-land, and standing to right in their courts, instead of their own old

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

which its true strength lay, and not in any outer attack, that we must look for the cause of the ruin which now hung over the English realm. From Ælfred's day it had been assumed that no man could exist without a lord, and the "lordless man" became a sort of outlaw in the realm. The free-man, the very base of the older English constitution, died down more and more into the "villein," the man who did suit and service to a master, who followed him to the field, who looked to his court for justice, who rendered days of service in his demesne. Eadgar's reign saw the practical completion of this great social revolution. It went on indeed unequally, and was never wholly complete. Free ceorls remained; and they remained in far larger numbers throughout northern England than in the south. But the bulk of the ceorls had disappeared. The free social organization of the earlier English conquerors of Britain was passing into the social organization which we call

county gemótas; while the lords themselves ran riot, dealt with their once free neighbours at their own discretion, and filled the land with civil dissensions which not even the terrors of foreign invasion could still. Nothing can be more clear than that the universal breaking up of society in the time of Æthelred had its source in the ruin of the old free organization of the country. The successes of Swegen and Cnut, and even of William the Norman, had much deeper causes than the mere gain or loss of one or more battles. A nation never falls till 'the citadel of its moral being' has been betrayed and become untenable. Northern invasions will not account for the state of brigandage which Æthelred and his Witan deplore in so many of their laws. The ruin of the free cultivators and the overgrowth of the lords are much more likely causes." (Kemble, "Saxons in England," i. 306, 307.)

feudalism; and the very foundations of the old order were broken up in the degradation of the freeman and in the up-growth of the lord with his dependent villeins. The same tendencies drew the lesser thegns around the greater nobles, and these around the provincial ealdormen. And this social revolution necessarily brought a political revolution in its train. The independence and rivalry of the great ealdormen seemed about to wreck completely the unity of the State. Even in the Church the bishop was parted from the clergy, as the clergy itself was reft asunder by the strife of regular with secular. Nothing indeed but a force from without could weld these warring elements again into a nation; but the very weakness which they brought about made the work of such a force easy, and laid England prostrate at the foot of the Dane.

The kingdom of the Danes.

During the years of Æthelwine's rule a new storm had been gathering in the north. At the close of the ninth century the kingdoms of the Danes had felt the same impulse towards national consolidation which had already given birth to Norway; and their union is attributed to Gorm the Old.[1] The physical character of the isles and of the Danish territory on the mainland aided in the rapid developement of a great monarchy;[2] the flat country, penetrated everywhere by arms of the sea, offered few natural obstacles to the carrying out of a single will; and from the first

[1] Gorm, according to Adam of Bremen, came of the stock of a Norwegian conqueror, Hardegon or Harthacnut; but nothing is known of his previous history, save that he had fought among the Wikings at Haslo in 882.

[2] Dahlmann, "Gesch. von Dännemark," i. 68, 128.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

we find in Denmark no hereditary jarls, as in Norway, nor petty chiefs surviving under their overlord, as in Sweden, but the rule of a king whose nobles were mere dependents on his court. Under Gorm therefore the whole strength of the Danes was gathered up in a single hand. We have already seen how great that strength was. While the northmen of Jutland were waging their war with the Empire, and the northmen of Norway mastering the string of isles from Ireland to the Færoes, the Danes, who had grown up in silence round a centre which tradition places at Lethra in Zeeland, came suddenly to the front and struck fiercely to east and to west.[1] In 853 they strove to conquer Courland in the Baltic. In 866 they landed under Inguar on the shores of Britain; and the long and bitter warfare which ended in the establishment of the Danelaw in this island must have absorbed their energies till the struggle at home which set Gorm on the throne at Lethra about the close of the ninth century. Of that struggle or of the king's rule in his new realm we know nothing; but the strength which came of union was soon shown

[1] The stories of Othere and Wulfstan, in Ælfred's "Orosius," are the first authentic accounts of this eastern Denmark, a name which the description of Othere restricts to the islands and lands east of the Great Belt, and thus denies as yet to Jutland. Wulfstan too speaks of Denmark as a well-known kingdom with the same bounds. But of its history at this time we know nothing, save from some sagas which tell of a king's seat at Lethra. (Dahlmann, i. 61.) The Frankish chroniclers are busy with their assailants from South Jutland; the English tell of the Danes who reached their shores, but say nothing of their mother-land. Indeed the strength of the latter is only a matter of inference from the vigour of its outer attacks.

in Gorm's conquest of Jutland, a conquest which opened up for the Danes a fresh field of activity in the south, and affected their fortunes by bringing them in contact with the Germany which had just disengaged itself from the wreck of the Karolingian Empire.

Harald Blue-tooth.

In their attack on the south, however, the Danes were roughly beaten back; for Gorm, pressing in 934 into Friesland, was met by the German forces under Henry the Fowler, and so utterly defeated that he submitted to pay tribute and to take back the mission priests whom he had driven from the land. Gorm's life closed with the blow, and a few years after[1] he rested with his wife Thyra under their two huge mounds, which still survive in the village of Jelling by the town of Weile. But if his son, Harald Blue-tooth, kept peace with his neighbour in the south, it was that he found fields of action as tempting and less dangerous to east and west and north. It marks the range of the Danish activity that in the midst of the tenth century one of Harald's sons was setting up a kingdom in Semland on the Baltic, while another son, Eric, was taken in 949 for king by the Northumbrian Danes of Britain. Eric's rule was a short one, and he fell unaided by his father; though the Danish fleets were now often seen in the British Channel. But it was not to Britain or to the British Danelaw that Harald Blue-tooth's ambition looked. The Danelaw in Frankland, the Normandy which

[1] Gorm is supposed to have died about 936. (Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 72.) Harald Blaatand was born at latest in 910.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

had been carved by Hrolf out of the Karolingian realm, was now pressed hard by its foes, and forced to appeal for aid to the mightiest power of the north. In his earliest years we find Harald settled by William Longsword as an ally in the Cotentin;[1] in 944 he was again called to save Normandy from Otto the Great; and about 963 he once more came to Duke Richard's aid. At this moment he was at the height of his power, for two years before the divisions of the northmen and his own unscrupulous guile had opened a new field for Danish greed, and enabled him to establish an overlordship over Norway;[2] and with his triumph over Otto he at last disclosed the ambitious hopes that had drawn him so often to Norman soil. Harald looked upon Normandy as a starting-point for a fresh attack of the northmen on Frankland, and called on the young duke to march at his side. But he found a sudden bar to his project in the political instinct of the Normans themselves. Hate them as the Franks might, it was to the Franks that their new religion and civilization irresistibly drew them; and their refusal for ever closed to the Danes all hope of a dominion in Gaul.

Harald and Swein.

Though foiled in the west, Harald was still a mighty power in Scandinavia itself; and even before this overthrow of his Norman hopes he had renewed his father's attack on the south, where Otto the Great had planted the Saxon duchy as a barrier at his very door. Harald was tempted by the Emperor's long absence in Italy to trouble this Saxon land; but on Otto's

[1] Dahlmann, "Gesch. v Dännemark," i. 74.

[2] For date, see Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 78.

return in 965 he overran South Jutland, drove Harald to his ships, and forced him again to pay tribute and to submit to baptism.[1] A fresh absence of Otto led to a renewal of the war in 967, and in 974 it broke out yet more fiercely on the Emperor's death; but though Harald brought to the field his new subjects from Norway under Jarl Hakon, a decisive victory of the Germans again forced him to peace. His defeats shook his power; Norway seems to have slipped from his grasp; and his later years at home were spent in warfare with his rebel son, Swein. Swein's story carries us at once into the full tide of northern romance; we are told that he was the child of a slave mother, who served in the house of Palnatoki, a noble of Fünen,[2] where alone the boy found refuge from his father's hate. Here too Swein learned to cling to the old gods of his people, and thus furnished a centre for the growing disaffection of the eastern parts of the kingdom, where heathendom still held its own. Since his last fight with Otto Harald had resolutely embraced Christianity; he had forsaken the old heathen sanctuary of Lethra to build a castle and church for himself at Roeskilde hard by,[3] and his home in his later years seems to have been the Christianized Jutland. Thence "he sent a message over all the kingdom that all people should be baptized and follow the true faith; and he himself followed the message, and used power and

[1] For date, see Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 81, note.

[2] This seems disproved by Otto's having him baptized with Harald, as heir of the kingdom.

[3] Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 83.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

violence when nothing else would do."[1] But his efforts roused a bitter resistance. It was on the shore of Jutland, ran the legend, that Harald saw a great stone, and longing to set it up on his mother's mound, harnessed to it not horses but men. Then as he watched it move he asked of one who stood by, "Hast thou ever seen such a load moved by hands of men?" "Yes," said the stranger, "for I come from a place where thy son Swein is drawing all Denmark to him. See now which is the greater load!"

Jomsborg.

Harald strove to meet the danger by driving Swein from the land; but his warriors forsook him, and in a final battle about 986 he was so sorely wounded, it is said by an arrow from Palnatoki's hand, that he fled from his realm to the eastern sea, and died at Jomsborg, a stronghold at the mouth of the Oder, which he had won for himself in the days gone by, and from which he had maintained his mastery of the Baltic.[2] Jomsborg, if we may trust its story,[3] soon became the great difficulty of Harald's successor. While Swein[4] was opening his reign with the restoration of heathendom and a persecution of the Christian

[1] Saga of Olaf Tryggvason, Laing, "Sea-kings," i. 426.

[2] See the story in the "Encomium Emmæ," Langebek, ii. 474. Olaf Tryggvason's Saga (Laing, "Sea-kings," i. 403) makes the strife begin in Swein's demand of half the kingdom.

[3] For the worth of the Jomsviking Saga, see Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 87, 88, note.

[4] Suan, Sweno, Suen (later written "Swend," but never pronounced so), Adam of Bremen's "Svein," and the English "Swegen" (where the "g" is soft like a "y"), are all different ways of spelling the same sound. See Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 88, note.

preachers, Palnatoki and the fiercer of the heathen Danes, resolved to find a secure refuge from the new religion and the civilization it brought with it, sailed to the Baltic, seized Jomsborg, and founded there a state to which no man might belong save on proof of courage, where no woman might enter within the walls, and where all booty was in common. It may have been that Palnatoki fled thither because his deadly arrow, though it set Swein on the throne, raised inevitably the blood-feud between him and the young king: but in any case the conversion of Jomsborg from a base of Danish power in the Baltic into an independent state was sufficient to call Swein to its attack.

Swein and the Jomsborgers.

Ill luck however beset him: twice, it is said, he was taken by the Jomsborgers and freed for gold;[1] but peace was at last brought about, and a saga[2] tells us how Swein's guile and ambition mingled in the burial-feast for his father Harald. "King Swein made a great feast to which he invited all the chiefs in his dominions, for he willed to give the succession-feast or heirship-ale after his father Harald. A little time before Strut Harald had died in Scania, and Vesete in Bornholm, father to Bue the Thick and to Sigurd. So King Swein sent word to the Jomsborg Wikings

[1] The contemporary evidence of Thietmar of Merseburg shows that he was at least once "taken by the Northmen"; and that the charge of slave-blood was one of his great difficulties. Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 89, note. The Jomsborg Saga, followed by that of Olaf Tryggvason, makes the price of his release a marriage with the Wendish King Burislaf's daughter, Gunhild, who became the mother of Cnut.

[2] Laing, "Sea-kings of Norway," i. 404.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

that Earl Sigwald, and Bue, and their brothers, should come to him, and drink the funeral-ale for their father in the same feast the king was giving. The Jomsborg Wikings came to the feast with their bravest men, eleven ships of them from Wendland, and twenty ships from Scania. Great was the multitude of people assembled. The first day of the feast, before King Swein went up into his father's high seat, he drank the bowl to his father's memory, and made the solemn vow that before three winters were passed he would go over with his army to England, and either kill King Æthelred or drive him out of the country. This heirship-bowl all who were at the feast drank. Thereafter for the chiefs of the Jomsborg Wikings was filled and drunk the largest horn to be found, and of the strongest drink. When that bowl was emptied all men drank Christ's health, and again the fullest measure and the strongest drink were handed to the Jomsborg Wikings. The third bowl was to the memory of St. Michael, which was drunk by all. Thereafter Earl Sigwald emptied a remembrance-bowl to his father's honour, and made the solemn vow that before three winters came to an end he would go to Norway, and either kill Jarl Hakon or drive him out of the country." Whether Hakon slew the Jomsborgers or the Jomsborgers Hakon, Swein had a foe the less; and the vow of Jarl Sigwald cleared the way for the carrying out of the vow of the Danish king himself.

Swein the Wiking.

The vow however was to be long in fulfilment; for hardly had the Jomsborgers steered to their doom in the north, when Eric of Sweden, whose throne had been threatened both by Harald and Swein, seized

the moment of exhaustion to break Denmark's power in the Eastern Sea. Allying himself with the Poles and their duke, Mieczyslav, his success was even greater than his aim, for after fierce sea-fighting he succeeded in driving Swein not only from the Baltic but from Denmark itself; so complete indeed was Swein's overthrow, that fourteen years had to pass before he could return to the land. He fell back on the Wiking life of his earlier youth; and after a fruitless effort to wrest Norway from Jarl Hakon, who now ruled there in his own name, he steered for the Irish Channel. It was a time when the seas were again thronged with northern freebooters. The union of the kingdoms, the stern rule of Harald and Jarl Hakon, the wars of the Danes with Norway, and of Sweden with the Danes, above all the strife of religions, had roused afresh the spirit of adventure and wandering. The rovers who had been absorbed for a while by Harald's enterprizes in Frankland and Saxon-land found no work in northern waters during the peace that followed Swein's expulsion; and Wiking fleets, as of old, appeared off the English coasts. Swein himself had probably taken part, as a youth, in the piratical attacks which troubled the coasts of Wessex and Kent from 980 to 982; and though these were interrupted, it may be by the strife between Harald and Swein, the renewal of the raids in 988[1] might have warned England of the danger that was gathering in the north. Three years later indeed, in 991, came the first burst of the storm.[2] A body of Norwegian Wikings landed on the eastern coasts,

The Danish Conquest. 988-1016.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 988.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 991.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

and after plundering Ipswich marched southward upon Essex.[1] At Maldon it met the ealdorman Brihtnoth, who had hastened to save the town. For a while the tide parted the hosts, but as it fell the pirates plunged through the ford, and threw themselves on the shield-wall of the Englishmen. The wall was at last broken; the war-band of Brihtnoth was slain around its lord; and the broken fragments of his force bore off his body from the field.

Æthelred.

The defeat presaged ill for the resistance which England under its ealdormen was to offer to the Dane.[2] But whatever strength the great ealdormanries might have possessed for the conflict was broken

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 991.

[2] The materials for the history of this time are very scanty. As to the chronicles, we really have only one—that of Worcester—which is preserved to us in the later compilation made at Peterborough. Fortunately this chronicle is full and vigorous throughout, and in some places, as in 1007, it is clearly the work of a contemporary. It was not till 1043 that Abingdon borrowed a copy of this and used it as a base for the chronicle then being compiled at Abingdon, which till 1043 differs little from the Worcester account. This chronicle, with the charters and laws, are the only authorities of contemporary and primary value as yet. Two hundred years later came the twelfth-century translators and compilers, Florence of Worcester, William of Malmesbury, Henry of Huntingdon, differing much in temper from one another, but equally removed in time from the events they narrate, and equally swayed by the patriotic revival of their day. It is true of all—as Mr. Freeman says of the two last—that though they occasionally supply additional details, "it is dangerous to trust them except when they show signs of following authorities which are now lost" ("Norm. Conq." i. 258, note). Beyond these materials we have only the northern sagas, which are yet later and more fabulous; nor is there any contemporary Norman authority till we reach the "Encomium Emmæ."

at this moment by the king. Æthelred had now reached manhood; he was indeed already father of two boys, the younger of whom was to be known as Eadmund Ironside. He was handsome and pleasant of address, and though he was taunted by his opponents with having the temper of a monk rather than of a warrior, there were none who denied his capacity or activity.[1] But behind, and absorbing all, was a haughty pride in his own kingship. The imperial titles which had been but sparsely used by his predecessors are employed profusely in his charters; nor was his faith in these lofty pretensions ever shaken even at the time of his greatest misfortunes. His attitude was thus one of stubborn opposition throughout his reign to the efforts of the great ealdormen to control the Crown; it was in fact his revolt from this control, and his persistence in setting aside the rede or counsel in which it embodied itself, that earned him the title of "Unrædig," or the counsel-lacking king, which a later blunder changed into the title of the Unready. Unready, shiftless, without resource, Æthelred never was. His difficulties, indeed, sprang in no small degree from the quickness and ingenuity with which he met one danger by measures that created another. A man of expedients rather than wisdom, he devised administrative and financial plans which, though they were to

[1] William of Malmesbury ("Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 268) "wonders, Cur homo ut a majoribus nos accepimus neque multum fatuus neque nimis ignavus in tam tristi pallore tot calamitatum vitam consumpserit." The cause he sees for this is, "Ducum defectionem ex superbia regis prodeuntem," and this statement is no doubt mainly true.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

serve as moulds for our later policy, he had himself neither the strength nor the patience to carry out to any profitable issue. He was capable of brave fighting, when driven hard. But impulsive, fitful in temper, changeful and ready to fling away the fruits of one course of policy by sudden transition to another, he was filled with a restless energy which never ceased to dash itself against the forces round it. He sought safety in skilful negotiations with the foreigner when it was only to be attained by a firm and consistent government at home. It was with the same quick but shallow cleverness that he seized this moment of national peril to open his real reign by a blow at the great houses that had till now held him down.[1]

[1] The charters enable us to follow the course of the great ealdormen under Eadward the Martyr. Ælfhere of Mercia, Æthelwine of East-Anglia, and Brihtnoth of Essex still sign first as before: but Æthelmær becomes "dux," and in 981 an "Eadwine dux" is added. We know from the chronicle in 982 that Æthelmær was ealdorman in Hampshire (*i.e.* of the "Wentanienses provinciæ") and Eadwine in Sussex. Both these died in 982; but Æthelweard, who had been a minister under Eadgar, and was also made dux by Eadward (Cod. Dip. 611), that is, Ealdorman of the Western Provinces (cf. Cod. Dip. 698), was destined to larger and higher fortunes. In a charter assigned to 983, but which if so must be early in that year, we find two new names, Thored and Ælfric, among the duces (Cod. Dip. 636); Ælfric having taken the place of the dead Æthelmær as "dux Wentaniensium Provinciarum" (cf. Cod. Dip. 698 and 642). We see however another Ælfric signing among the "ministri," who must have been son of the great Ealdorman of the Mercians, for on Ælfhere's death in the same year, 983, his name disappears from the charters, and we find two Ælfrics signing as duces, one no doubt the Ealdorman of Central-Wessex, the other Ælfhere's successor in his ealdormanry. Æthelwine however succeeds to

His policy.

The death of Brihtnoth, with that of Æthelwine in the following year,[1] no sooner left Æthelred's hands free than change followed change. The Northumbrian earldom was made less formidable by its division between Ælfhelm and Waltheof, the one earl of Deira, the other of Bernicia, to whose older stock he belonged.[2] The Mercian ealdormen had ceased with the exile of Ælfric in 985, and in this year at latest the king set about breaking up this vast power by creating an ealdorman of the Hwiccas in Leofwine.[3] Æthelred next secured the dependence of Essex by the appointment of Leofsige as its ealdorman.[4] Leofsige, as the king himself tells us, was a new thegn of the royal court, who owed his elevation to the royal favour.[5] Æthelred's attitude was naturally one of standing

Ælfhere's position at the head of the duces; while the Mercian Ælfric signs after all but Thored (Cod. Dip. 1279). Both Ælfrics still sign in 984; but in 985 one of them disappears from the charters (Cod. Dip. 1283), and the chronicle tells us that the Mercian ealdorman was banished in that year. Ælfric of Hampshire on the other hand, goes on signing with Æthelwine, Brihtnoth, and Æthelweard through the next four years; and when Brihtnoth dies in 991 and Æthelwine in 992, we find the two West-Saxon ealdormen, Æthelweard and Ælfric, signing at the head of the duces in 994 (Cod. Dip. 687). With them are Leofwine, Ealdorman of the Hwiccas, Leofsige, Ealdorman of the "East-Saxons" (Cod. Dip. 698), and Ælfhelm "of the Northumbrian provinces," with a certain northman.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 992. [2] They first sign in 994. Cod. Dip. 687.

[3] His first signature is in 994. Cod. Dip. 687. For his ealdormanry see Cod. Dip. 698.

[4] Leofsige signs as "dux Orientalium Saxonum." Cod. Dip. 698.

[5] "Quem de satrapis nomine tuli ad celsioris apicem dignitatis dignum duxi promoveri ducem constituendo." Cod. Dip. 719.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

opposition to the great ealdormen who had overawed the Crown, and Leofsige was the first of the new series of royal favourites, of ministers trained in the royal court, through whom the king sought to counteract the pressure of the great nobles. The favourites whom he chose indeed, so far as we can trace them, seem by their ability to have justified the king's choice. It was, no doubt, under Æthelred's own guidance that Leofsige, with the West-Saxon ealdormen, Æthelweard and Ælfric, took from this time the main part in the conduct of affairs. But the revolution had only helped to shatter what force remained of national resistance, and the first act of these counsellors shows their sense of the weakness of the realm.

Outer difficulties.

Many of the difficulties which Æthelred had to face were not of his own making. The long minority, the rule of Æthelwine, had fatally weakened his cause before he really stood out as king. It must have been during these years that Eadgar's fleet disappeared—and it was the loss of the rule of the seas which told so hardly against England afterwards. Not only was a storm gathering in the east, but dangers were thickening to the south and to the west. The descents of Danish marauders and fleets ought to have warned England to gird itself to meet a far greater peril; they were but advance-guards, but signs of the new restlessness which was gathering hosts such as England had never seen for the expedition under Swein and Olaf three years later. To the southward lay the land of the Normans, now to play a part in English history which was never to cease till the Norman duke was

hailed as English king. Westward a new power was growing up in Wales. Utterly unable to unite into a permanent state, the Welsh drew together from time to time under chieftains who won a brief supremacy; and in these years of peace Meredydd the son of Owen had succeeded in making himself master of nearly the whole of what is now called Wales. Silently the clouds drew together. In the very year of the victory of the Norwegians in East-Anglia, Meredydd was not only at war with the English but had formed an alliance with the northmen; and that this union was a real danger we see from the treaty of subsidy which was now negotiated with the enemy by the king's counsellors.

The two treaties.

Already indeed their hope lay less in any resistance on the part of England itself than in the divisions of its foes. The Norwegian force which had slain Brihtnoth was still on English soil, but instead of attacking it the king's advisers found a sum equal to a fourth of the annual revenues of the Crown, ten thousand pounds, to buy off its hostility.[1] The treaty was not one of withdrawal; it was a buying of frith. The Norwegians swore to help Æthelred against any foes who might attack England; neither party was to receive the enemies of the other.[2] The other provisions of the peace are inconsistent with any notion of the fleet sailing away. It may in

[1] The treaty of subsidy was negotiated by Archbishop Sigeric, and the ealdormen, Æthelweard of the Western Provinces and Ælfric of Central Wessex. See Thorpe's "Anc. Laws and Institutes," i. 284.

[2] "And that neither they nor we harbour the other's Wealh, nor the other's thief, nor the other's foe." *Ib.* p. 289.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

fact have been the policy of Sigeric and the two ealdormen to hold the Norwegian force to aid against Swein's expected descent, a policy of division which was continued by Bishop Ælfheah of Winchester when the descent actually came three years later. Their next step was to detach Normandy from their Scandinavian assailants. Trouble had for some time been growing up between the Norman and the English courts, perhaps owing to the aid given by Normans to the earlier predatory descents on the English coasts, and if we trust the one account we have of these transactions, war was only averted by the mediation of the Pope. However this may be, an English embassy appeared at Rouen and concluded a treaty with Duke Richard, the first recorded diplomatic transaction between the two powers, on terms that neither Æthelred nor the duke should receive the other's foes.[1]

Outbreak of war.

Had the two treaties been backed by energetic measures of resistance within the realm itself, they would have rendered the enterprise which Swein was now plotting an all but hopeless one; for with the Norman ports closed against him, and the

[1] This Norman "frith" rests wholly on the authority of William of Malmesbury, "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 270. Mr. Freeman accepts it as true. This treaty implies that both sides had already received the foes of the other. The northmen were doubtless the foes of Æthelred, but who were Richard's? It is possible that Dunstan's connexion with Flanders, and his policy of drawing England closer to it, a step which so greatly influenced the after relations of England, was meant by him as a provision against Normandy, and so was understood by the Norman dukes. The treaties with the Norwegians and with Normandy were no doubt accompanied by some arrangement with Wales.

Norwegian host hanging on his flank, the Danish king could hardly have faced a united England. But it was just this national union that every day made more impossible. The pirate force still clung to the English coast; and in 992 Æthelred gathered a fleet at London of ships furnished by that city and East-Anglia, while the fyrd, drawn probably mainly from Hampshire and the surrounding shires, was intrusted to the leading of ealdorman Ælfric of Central Wessex and earl Thored. The joint force was to "betrap" the Norwegians; the fyrd, as we may suppose, holding them in play on land till the fleet had cut off their retreat by sea. The plan however was foiled by the English leader. Ælfric had now been ealdorman for nearly ten years, and since the deaths of Brihtnoth and Æthelwine he had stood second in rank and importance only to his fellow West-Saxon ealdorman, Æthelweard; nor does the story of the chronicle give any grounds for his sudden desertion.[1] It may be that he felt Æthelred's

[1] It is possible that the danger by which Wessex alone was immediately threatened developed what may have been a purely West-Saxon policy of subsidizing the Norwegian fleet, a policy which was represented by the three rulers of Southern Britain, the Archbishop, Ælfric, and Æthelweard. Their course of action had been formally accepted by the nation in the treaty of the preceding year; but may we not see in the plan now proposed for the destruction of the Norwegians the triumph of a party in the king's council hostile to the policy of the southern ealdormen, and to any alliance with the enemy? The betrayal of the Norwegians seems to have been in fact a distinct breach of treaty on the part of England, an attempted act of treachery such as was carried out ten years later on St. Brice's Day, possibly by the advice of the same party among the Witan. Under these circumstances Ælfric's

plans to be fatal to his order, or that he distrusted the king's personal hostility, for his flight unaccompanied by his followers looks rather like an act of sudden panic than of deliberate treachery; but whatever were the causes of his action, on the night before the execution of the joint scheme he stole to the pirates' camp, and his warning enabled them to escape after an engagement with the English fleet.[1] Ælfric's ship was captured in the fight, but the ealdorman may have escaped and accompanied the northmen when, in 993, their fleet sailed along the coast, ravaged at the mouth of the Humber, and sacked Bamborough, as Æthelred chose this moment for ordering his son Ælfgar to be blinded, it may be in punishment for his father's treason.[2]

Norwegian and Dane.

The Norwegian fleet however was only the advance guard of the greater host which was gathering in the Irish Channel. The Wikings mustered not only round Swein but round Olaf Tryggvason, a claimant to the throne of Norway, though driven as yet like

conduct may have another explanation than that of deliberate treason. His province was in the utmost danger; he had been responsible for the policy hitherto pursued; and the sense of the peril of so rash and false a course as that now adopted may have urged him to give warning to the Norwegians so as to avert the catastrophe. This explanation of his conduct would seem to agree with the after-course of the story, with Ælfric's later return to the first place among the ealdormen, with the fact that his place in Hampshire does not seem to have been filled up during his absence, and that Bishop Ælfheah of Winchester apparently acted instead of him two years later in face of the threatened attack of 994, and carried out in union with Ealdorman Æthelweard exactly the same policy (A. S. G.).

[1] Eng. Chron. (Abingdon), a. 992. [2] *Ibid.* a. 993.

Swein himself to find a kingdom on the seas. Olaf had been long in the western waters; his saga makes him harry the coasts of Scotland, fight in Man and the Hebrides, and plunder along either coast of the Irish Channel[1] before his junction with Swein; and their joint force must have drawn to it all the rovers of the seas.[2] The preparations for this alliance and joint enterprise must have occupied a considerable time, and it is no doubt in the anticipation of this great blow that we must find the secret of English policy in the years which preceded its actual delivery, and especially the secret of the treaty of subsidy which was concluded by Ælfric and Sigeric with the Norman duke. In September, 994, King Olaf and King Swein, with a joint fleet of nearly a hundred ships, entered the Thames unopposed. It

[1] Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 396—398. According to the saga, "When Olaf left the west, intending to sail to England, he came to the Scilly Isles lying westward from England in the ocean. . . . . While he lay in the Scilly Isles he heard of a seer or fortune-teller on the islands who could tell beforehand things not yet done." Having tried this man's skill, "Olaf perceived he was a true fortune-teller, and had the gift of prophecy. He went once more to the hermit and asked how he came to have such wisdom. The hermit replied that the Christian's God Himself let him know all that he desired; and he brought before Olaf many great proofs of the power of the Almighty. Olaf agreed to let himself be baptized, and he and all his followers were baptized forthwith. He remained here a long time, took the true faith, and got with him priests and other learned men." (A. S. G.).

[2] The sense of danger was no doubt quickened by a consciousness of intrigue at home, for there were certainly English invitations addressed to Swein. See Cod. Dip. 704, where Ætheric, an East-Saxon, is charged with having promised to support Swein on his arrival.

was significant of the new station which London was from this time to occupy in our history that their first anchorage on Lady-day was off its walls; and that though they at once attacked the city, they were beaten back by the stout fighting of the burghers and forced at last to sail away, harrying, burning, and manslaying along the southern coast.[1] At Southampton they found at last an entry into the land, and taking horse there, the host rode for a while without opposition till their progress was checked by the appearance of Æthelred with an army at Andover. It seemed as if the fortune of England was to be settled by the sword: but the policy of the young king and of his advisers, bishop Ælfheah of Winchester and ealdorman Æthelweard[2] of western Wessex, was one of diplomacy rather than of arms. Their secret hope was still to break the storm by dividing northman from northman, and with this view a truce was arranged by which the army of the two kings, on payment of sixteen thousand pounds of gold, and a promise of supplies from all Wessex, took up its winter quarters at Southampton. Æthelred's hopes were realized, however, rather by his good luck than by his diplomacy; for during the winter's rest news came from Norway of the growing unpopularity of Jarl Hakon, and of the cry of its people for a king of Harald Fair-hair's stock.[3] Olaf became eager to end his work in England and to set sail for the north. It

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 994. "They there bore more harm and evil than they ever bethought them any burgh-men should do."

[2] Æthelweard always signs first among the duces after Æthelwine's death. See Cod. Dip. 698.

[3] Olaf Tryggvason's Saga, Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 418.

was therefore with little difficulty that bishop Ælfheah and ealdorman Æthelweard, aided by the difference of religion between the two kings—for Olaf was now a Christian and Swein a heathen—managed to break their league, and to bring the Norwegian leader to an interview with Æthelred at Andover.[1] In return for the king's gifts Olaf pledged himself to withdraw from England and return to it no more, and his retreat in the summer of 995 forced Swein also to withdraw.

Weakness of the English defence.

The two years that followed this withdrawal were spent in a quiet which might have been used to build up an efficient system of national defence.[2] But

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 994.

[2] In the present period William of Malmesbury and Florence of Worcester have given the tone to the general accounts of modern writers. Both have done much to confuse the annals of the time, especially Florence. His work as far as 994 seems to be a literal rendering of the first Worcester (or Peterborough) Chronicle, (though probably taken from the copy preserved in a second Worcester Chronicle, as we may see from the entry at 1004,) with occasional ecclesiastical insertions from a Ramsey Chronicle and other sources, and the usual rhetorical amplifications of the time. After this point various noteworthy insertions occur in his work which are without foundation in, or even in opposition to, the statements of the Chronicle, and especially in the account of Eadric from 1006 onwards. A poor translator of the Chronicle, he seems to have been a violent partizan, whose patriotism led him to account for every English defeat by a theory of betrayal. The story as the Chronicle gives it is one which is reasonable, if hard to follow from want of detail; but as the insertions of Florence have moulded it, the treason of the ealdormen accounts for every national defeat, and Æthelred is responsible for the slackness of the national resistance. As we have tried to show, however, the causes which underlay the great crash were not the individual action of this or that man,

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988. 1016.

nothing was done. The king's power indeed must have been shaken by the last year's events, for we not only find Ælfric again in England, but replaced in his old dignity as ealdorman of the Central Provinces, and even in his second place among the royal counsellors.[1] We know nothing of the circumstances of his return; but the fact itself shows that the royal power after its short outburst of vigour was again ebbing before the force of the great nobles. Its weakness told on the state of the realm. In 997, a band of pirates,[2] who may have been Ostmen from Ireland, appeared in the mouths of the Severn and the Tamar, harried Cornwall without opposition, and, advancing eastward the year after, carried their raids over Dorset, and finally took up their winter quarters in the Isle of Wight, where they levied supplies from the coasts of Hampshire and Sussex.[3] In 999 they pushed still further on, entered the Medway, attacked Rochester, and harried West Kent.[4] Whatever may have been the cause of Æthelred's inactivity before, this daring attack at last aroused both king and Witan. Danger threatened again on every hand; from Norman and from Ostmen, with wikings from Man, and

the treason of an ealdorman, or the weakness of a king, but must be sought in the social and political conditions of the time.

[1] He signs again as usual from 994. See Cod. Dip. 687, 688, 1289, &c.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 997.

[3] Eng. Chron. 998. "And forces were often gathered against them, but as soon as they should have joined battle, then there was ever, through some cause, flight begun, and in the end they ever had the victory."

[4] Eng. Chron. a. 999.

northmen from Cumberland. Ship-fyrd and land-fyrd were summoned, but delay followed delay, and the pirates were suffered to withdraw unharmed to the Norman harbours.[1] The absence of any attempt three years before to meet Swein's force at sea may be accounted for by the fact that the English vessels were too small to face the huge war-ships which were now employed by the Scandinavian kings; the failure to meet these pirates[2] shows that the naval system which had been built up by Ælfred had now been suffered to break utterly down. Æthelred's action at this moment suggests such a failure of the fleet. As if aware of the weakness of his own naval forces he now took into his service a force of Danes, with Pallig,[3] a brother-in-law of Swein, among them, and used this to clear the seas. The first point at which the king struck was Cumberland; the district had only just become mainly Norse in blood, but its position on the western coast made it perilous to the realm, and it had no doubt given aid to the Ostmen who had been harrying in the Channel. After descents on the Isle of Man and on Cumberland,[4] Æthelred again

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 1000.

[2] "When the ships were ready, then the crew delayed from day to day, and distressed the poor people that lay in the ships." Eng. Chron. a. 999.

[3] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (ed. Hardy), i. 289.

[4] Eng. Chron. a. 1000. The Norse settlement of Cumberland was such a source of danger in itself, as much probably to Malcolm of Scots as to Æthelred, that I see no reason to prefer the story in Fordun, iv. 34, to that in Henry of Huntingdon, a. 1000 (Arnold), p. 170.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988. 1016.

turned southward to follow the freebooters to their refuge across the Channel. If we may trust the Norman chroniclers, the king's descent on the coast of the Cotentin was roughly repulsed, and it may have been the discouragement of this failure which drove him anew to abandon warfare for his old field of diplomacy.

Death of Olaf.

The danger from the north, indeed, had now become a yet more pressing one. At the death of the Swedish king, Eric, Swein's fortunes had at last seen a change, for Denmark threw off the Swedish yoke and recalled its king.[1] Swein, indeed, had still to war with Eric's son, Olaf, till the mediation of Olaf's mother, whom he wedded, brought peace with Sweden, and enabled him to renew his father's effort to establish a supremacy over Norway. So great was the power of Olaf Tryggvason, that it was only in league with the Swedes and Jarl Hakon's son Eric, that Swein ventured to attack him; but ill luck threw the Norwegian king, with but a few vessels, into the midst of the enemy's fleet as it lurked among the islands off his coast. The fight in which he fell was long famous in the north. "King Olaf stood on the Serpent's quarter-deck, high above the rest. He had a gilded shield and a helm inlaid with gold; over his armour he wore a short red coat, and was easy to be distinguished from other men. When King Olaf saw that the scattered forces of the enemy gathered themselves under the banners of their ships, he asked 'Who is the chief of the force right over against us?'

[1] This was about A.D. 1000. Dahlmann, "Gesch. v. Dännemark," i. 92.

He was answered that it was King Swein with the Danish host. The king replied, 'We are not afraid of these soft Danes, for there is no bravery in them. But who are they to the right?' He was told King Olaf with the Swedes. 'Better for the Swedes,' he said, 'to be sitting at home killing their sacrifices than venturing under our weapons from the Long Serpent! But whose are the big ships to larboard?' 'That is Earl Eric Hakonson,' said they. 'Ah,' said the king, 'he, methinks, has good ground for meeting us, and we may look for sharp fighting with his men, for they are northmen like ourselves.'" It was, indeed, Earl Eric's men that pressed Olaf hardest in the fight that followed; and at last earl's ship and king's ship lay side by side. "So thick flew spears and arrows into the Serpent that the men's shields could scarce contain them, for the Serpent was girt in on all sides by our ships." Though Olaf's men fell fast, "Einar Tambarskelver, one of the sharpest of bow-shooters, stood yet by the mast and shot with his bow." But, as he drew his bow, an arrow from Eric's ship hit it in the midst and the bow was broken. "'What is that?' cried King Olaf, 'that broke with such a noise?' 'Norway, king, from thy hands!' cried Einar. 'No, not quite so much as that,' said Olaf; 'take my bow and shoot!' and he tossed the bow to him. Einar took the bow and drew it over the arrow's head. 'Too weak, too weak,' he said, 'for the bow of a mighty king!' and throwing down the bow he took sword and shield, and fought valiantly."[1] The fight, however, was all but over;

[1] Laing, "Sea Kings of Norway," i. 475.

OF NEW YORK

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

966-1016.

so few were the fighters that Eric could board the Serpent; the little group about the king were slain: and Olaf himself, throwing his shield over his head, leaped desperately into the sea.

The Norman marriage.

Master by this victory of the north, Swein's hands were free for his long-planned attack on England; and in 1002 it was clear that such an attack was impending. To deprive the Danish king of Norman aid and to close the Norman harbours against him was an obvious measure of precaution;[1] but as yet England had failed in securing the neutrality of Normandy either by treaties or by force of arms. Æthelred now resolved to bind Normandy to him by a personal bond, and in the Lent of 1002, Duke Richard's daughter Emma crossed to the shores of England as its king's wife. The step which the king took was one of the highest moment. In it Æthelred broke away from the traditional policy of his house, which from Æthelstan downwards had aimed at crushing or curbing the northmen of the Channel, by a measure which could not but link their fortunes with the fortunes of England itself. But Normandy was now a wholly different power from the pirate state which had roused jealous fear in Eadward or Æthelstan. The century which had passed since the settlement of the northmen along the Seine had seen the steady growth

[1] "The Jarls of Rouen reckoned themselves of kin to the chiefs in Norway, and held them in such respect that they were always the greatest friends of the northmen; and every northman found a friendly country in Normandy, if he needed it."—St. Olaf's Saga, Laing, "Sea Kings," ii. 16.

of the duchy in extent and in power. Much of this was due to the ability of its rulers, to the vigour and wisdom with which Hrolf forced order and justice on the new community, as well as to the political tact with which both Hrolf and William Longsword clung to the Karolings in their strife with the dukes of Paris. But still more was owing to the steadiness with which both these rulers remained faithful to the Christianity which had been imposed on the northmen as a condition of their settlement, and to the firm resolve with which they trampled down the temper and traditions which their people had brought from their Scandinavian homeland, and welcomed the language and civilization which came in the wake of their neighbours' religion.

Difficulties of the Norman dukes.

The difficulties that met the dukes were indeed enormous. Turn to France as they might, it was long before France would turn to them. It disbelieved in their religious earnestness, it credited wild stories about Hrolf's sacrifices on his death-bed, about the apostasy of William and his boy. It disbelieved in their craving for admission into the body of French nationality and French civilization—it called the Normans "pirates," and their chief the "pirates' duke." The very sovereigns whom they supported looked on them as intruders to be guarded against, and to be thrust out of the land if it were possible. They were girt in by hostile states, they were threatened at sea by England, under Æthelstan a network of alliances menaced them with ruin. Once a French army occupied Rouen, and a French king held the pirates' land at his will; once the

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

German lances were seen from the walls of their capital. Nor were their difficulties within less than those without. The subject population which had been trodden under foot by the northern settlers was seething with discontent. The policy of Christianization and civilization broke the Normans themselves into two parties. A great portion of the people clung to their old religion and their old tongue; and this body was continually reinforced by fresh incomers from the north or from the English Danelaw, and strengthened by those connexions with its heathen brethren in the Channel which were forced on the duchy by the French attacks. The very conquests of Hrolf and his successor, the Bessin, the Cotentin, had to be settled and held by the new comers, who made them strongholds of heathendom. The strength of this party of resistance was seen in a revolt which shook the throne of William Longsword, in the concession it forced from him that his child should be reared in the Bessin, in the pagan reaction which followed his death and gave a pretext for the invasion of Lewis From-over-sea, as well as in the stubborn resistance to change which must have gone on throughout the reign of the two dukes who followed William, ere it broke out for the last time in the revolt of Val-ès-dunes.

Their French policy.

But amidst difficulties from within and from without the dukes held firm to their course, and their stubborn will had its reward. In spite of reinforcement from their pirate-brethren, the balance of strength went more and more against the men who clung to the northern customs and the northern tongue. By

the end of William Longsword's days all Normandy, save the newly settled districts of the west, was Christian, and spoke French. So too in spite of the hatred and leagues of his neighbours, the Norman never loosed his grip from the land he had won. Attack indeed only widened its bounds, and added to the older duchy the broad lands of the Bessin and Cotentin. The work of the statesman at last completed the work of the sword. As the connexion of the dukes with the Karoling kings had given them the land, and helped them for fifty years to hold it against the House of Paris, so in the downfall of the Karolings the sudden and adroit change of front which bound the Norman rulers to the House of Paris in its successful struggle for the Crown secured the land for ever to the northmen. The close connexion which France was forced to maintain with the state whose support held the new royal line on its throne told both on kingdom and duchy. The French dread of the "pirates" died gradually away, while French influence spread yet more rapidly over a people which clung so closely to the French crown.

Its results.

It was thus that the social and religious change which was in full play at the death of William Longsword took a new strength and vigour through the days of his successor, Duke Richard the Fearless, whose long reign stretched over more than half a century, from 943 to 996. It opened, indeed, with a storm of reaction, the terrible strife which all but laid the duchy at the feet of Lewis From-over-sea. But the storm soon died down into a profound repose. Without, all danger passed away. France,

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

which brought the two countries fairly together. Events had shown that a mere convention such as that of 991 could not prevent Norman ports from being open and Norman aid given to Æthelred's Danish foes. Yet it was of the first importance if the Channel were to be kept clear that these ports should be closed to them. The measure was therefore right in policy;[1] and in its immediate results proved eminently successful, for from the moment of Emma's marriage Normandy not only stood apart from the Danish attack on its neighbour realm, but drifted more and more into an attitude of hostility against the Dane. It gave refuge to Æthelred when he was driven from his kingdom. It enabled him to return and again seize his crown. It sheltered his children from the hatred of Cnut. It at last plunged into war with the Danish kings for their restoration. But the indirect effects of Emma's marriage were far more momentous than its direct effects, both for England and for Normandy. In severing the duchy from all connexion with its Scandinavian kinsmen, as in binding its rulers by blood-ties to the English Crown, it suddenly opened for its rulers a distinct policy, a distinct course of action, which led to the Norman conquest of England. From the moment of Emma's marriage Normandy became a chief factor in English politics. For the next sixty years we shall have to watch the gradual strengthening of the tie which now for the first time bound the

[1] After the time of Swein's withdrawal, that is, from 997 to 1002, the war had really been a Norman war, fed by fleets finding harbour in Norman ports.

two countries directly together. For fifty years to come England saw a Norman Lady as queen or queen-mother wielding power in the land. The Norman settlement in England began with that of her train. With the shelter given to Æthelred at the Norman court, which was the first result of the marriage, as with its secondary issues in the protection of his children, their Norman training, and the gradual espousal of their claims on the English throne by the Norman nobles, began that interference of the Norman in the fortunes of England which was at last crowned by the victory of Senlac.

Political weakness of England.

Few of these issues, however, could be foreseen when Æthelred in the spring of 1002 brought home the duke's daughter as his wife.[1] All that the king aimed at was to guard against any co-operation of Normandy in the coming attack of Swein, and that result was secured. But Swein had still to be met; and whatever strength Æthelred had gained for this struggle by his foreign policy was more than compensated by the growing weakness within the realm. Since the revolution which followed on the death of Brihtnoth and Æthelwine the number and order of the great ealdormen had remained the same. At their head had stood the two West-Saxon ealdormen, Æthelweard and (in spite of his treason and temporary exile) Ælfric; then the Northumbrian ealdormen, Ælfhelm and Waltheof; then Leofwine of the Hwiccas, and Leofsige of Essex. Ulfcytel, though probably ruling at this time in East-Anglia, still

[1] In Lent 1002. Eng. Chron. (Peterborough).

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

bore only the title of thegn.[1] In 999 Æthelweard seems to have been removed by death, and Ælfric takes his place at the head of the ealdormen, but his three fellows remain as before. Leofsige was as active as of old; and while Æthelred was negotiating his Norman marriage the ealdorman of Essex was sent to the pirate fleet to buy a truce at a cost of twenty-four thousand pounds.[2] But the king was still secretly at feud with his counsellors; and in the case of Leofsige the hostility was embittered by the disappointment of the hopes with which Æthelred had raised him to his post. Favourite as he was, no sooner was he made ealdorman than his "pride and daring" and the offence he gave to the king equalled those of his fellow-nobles.[3] Æthelred took refuge in a fresh expedient by raising a new favourite, Æfic, to the post of High Reeve,[4] in which we may perhaps again see a foreshadowing of the coming justiciary. But the attempt was

[1] He first signs as minister in 988 (Cod. Dip. 1289), and is never found as "dux."

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 1001. The old Winchester Chronicle has here appended a curious entry of the year, which gives its proceedings in greater detail.

[3] "Leofsinum," says Æthelred in a charter (Cod. Dip. 719). "quem de satrapis nomine tuli, ad celsioris apicem dignitatis dignum duxi promovere, ducem constituendo, scilicet eum unde humiliari magis debuerat. . . . Sed ipse hoc oblitus, cernens se in culmine majoris status sub rogatu famulari sibi pestilentes spiritus promisit, superbiæ scilicet et audaciæ, quibus nichilominus ipse se dedidit in tantum ut floccipenderet quin offensione multimoda me multoties graviter offenderet."

[4] "Præfectum meum Æficum, quem primatum inter primatos meos taxavi," Cod. Dip. 719. "The King's High Reeve," Eng. Chron. a. 1002.

Weakness of Æthelred.

roughly met; for Leofsige at once broke into Æfic's house, and there slew him.[1]

In the general disgust at such a deed of violence, it was easy for Æthelred to win from the Witan a sentence of degradation and banishment against Leofsige;[2] but the outrage had revealed the inner strife within the royal council which was paralyzing all effective resistance to the Dane. The military measures of resistance were defeated by Æthelred himself. The chastisement of the Ostmen and the marriage alliance with Normandy had deprived Swein of his main sources of help without the realm; while for the defence of England itself Æthelred counted on the help of northmen like Pallig whom he had drawn into his service by offers of pay,[3] and who, like the huscarls that followed them, seem to have been quartered over the country throughout southern Britain. But however effective these measures might have been they were frustrated by the king's quick changes of purpose. Distrust grew up between the king and the northern mercenaries whom he had hired to meet the coming invasion. The security which Æthelred felt from his connexion with Normandy showed itself in a haughty indifference to their aid,

[1] "Non cunctatus in propria domo ejus eo inscio perimere," Cod. Dip. 719.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 1002. Leofsige's signature as ealdorman disappears after the year 1001. Cod. Dip. 719, which shows the Witan's part. The charter is of 1012, and shows how the deed rankled in Æthelred's mind ten years after.

[3] This employment of hired Danes may have been as much to strengthen him against his own ealdormen as against the northmen—an attempt to bring together a standing army.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

while in both king and people the dread of Swein's invasion broke out in whispers that these strangers were plotting the murder of the king and his Witan, and the seizure of the land; and in November, 1002, the panic spread to Æthelred himself. An order of the king which was welcomed everywhere brought about a general massacre of the Danes on St. Brice's Day,[1] and those who were not slain by the sword were burned in their houses.

Swein's attack.

The whole plan of defence was thus thrown into confusion, when Swein's fleet reached England in the spring of 1003. It steered for Exeter, the dowry town of Emma, and the surrender of the city by Hugh,[2] a Norman follower of the queen whom she had appointed its reeve, at once proclaimed the ruin of Æthelred's hopes from his alliance with the Normans, while it gave a new character to the war. During the previous fifteen years the Danish attacks had been mere plunder-raids; but the fall of Exeter gave Swein a base of operations from which he could advance into the heart of the country. He had marched into Wiltshire before any force could be gathered to oppose him, but here he was met by the fyrd of Wiltshire and Hampshire under the command of their own ealdorman, Ælfric. For the last few years Ælfric had stood at the head of the royal counsellors; but he was now prostrated with sickness, and his camp torn with strife which

[1] November 13. Eng. Chron. a. 1002.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 1003. The attack on Exeter looks as if Swein came from Normandy, which would explain the betrayal of the city by the Norman Hugh.

in the end left Swein master of the field.[1] The fyrd in fact broke up without fighting, and Swein marched by Wilton and Old Sarum to the sea unhindered.[2] But the war was now to take a wider range. With the exception of a few raids it had been limited for fifteen years, from 988 to 1003, to Wessex. But Wessex must now have been harried till little booty was left. In the next year, 1004, his fleet appeared "unawares" on the coast of East-Anglia, seized and harried Norwich, a town which had grown up at the junction of the Wensum with the Yare, and which was now the chief port on the eastern coast. Ulfcytel, whose name tells of northern blood, was ruler in East-Anglia: and though he bore but the title of thegn, his position seems to have been one of as great independence as that of the earlier ealdormen. The Danes knew the land as "Ulfcytel's land," and now that Swein appeared off the coast the thegn and his Witan made their own treaties and fought their own fights as if East-Anglia were again a separate kingdom. The Witan saw at first no course left save to buy off the invaders; but while the truce for this purpose went on, the Danes suddenly marched inland and plundered Thetford. Ulfcytel summoned the fyrd in haste, and thin as were his ranks, the Danes themselves owned that "never worse hand-

[1] Ælfric's sickness, which the Chronicle brands as mere treachery, was probably real enough. The strife within the camp had more to do with the breakdown of the fyrd than the sickness of the general. "Hi anræde næron."

[2] "To the sea again, where he knew that his sea-horses were," Eng. Chron. 1003.

play met they among Englishmen."[1] But the day still went for the northmen. The East-Anglian fyrd broke with the loss of its noblest warriors, and no hindrance lay in the way of Swein's march into the heart of Britain.

Internal troubles.

Again however the doom of the country was delayed. We do not know whether dangers at home drew Swein from his enterprise, or whether his force was insufficient for a more serious campaign; but from East-Anglia his fleet sailed back again to Denmark, and for a year at least the country had a respite from Danish attack. But it had no respite from the more fatal troubles within. Æfic's place at court was filled by a new high reeve, Wulfgeat, who probably directed the king's policy in the short interval of peace that followed Swein's departure at the end of 1004. But only two years later, in 1006, the new minister was displaced by a revolution which seems to have been accompanied by deeds of violence like those which had accompanied the fall of Æfic.[2] The murder of the Deiran ealdorman Ælfhelm in the course of this revolution brought about a change of

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 1004.

[2] The Chronicle says: "Wulfgeat was deprived of all his goods, Wulfeah and Ufegeat were blinded, and Ealdorman Ælfhelm (of Deira) was slain." This short entry is expanded by Florence, in the twelfth century, into an ambush and murder of Ælfhelm at Shrewsbury by Eadric, and a blinding of "his sons," Wulfeah and Ufegeat, by Æthelred. The story is legendary in form, evidently looks on Eadric as already ealdorman of Mercia in 1006, a year before his appointment, and is of no contemporary value.

government in the north, for Æthelred saw himself forced to undo the policy of Dunstan and Eadgar, to mass together Deira and Bernicia into a single earldom, and to place it in the hands of Uhtred, whose father Waltheof had, as we have seen, been earl of the Bernicians. Uhtred showed his strength by a victory which he gained at Durham over the Scot king, Malcolm, who made at this time an inroad into the north, and Æthelred was glad to bind him to his cause by a marriage with his daughter Ælfgifu.[1]

Eadric.

The fate of Æfic and of Wulfgeat was far from turning Æthelred from his ministerial schemes. The number of the great ealdormen and their influence at court had gone on steadily diminishing. The places of those that died do not seem to have been commonly filled up; and after the death of Ælfhelm only Ælfric and Leofwine remained to sign the royal charters. Uhtred and Ulfcytel existed as provincial rulers, but can have hardly swayed the policy of a court in which they seldom appear. That policy was now Æthelred's own, or rather that of a new high reeve, Eadric, for whom the disgrace of Wulfgeat seems to have made room. While later tradition charged the new minister, as political faction has

[1] Simeon of Durham (Twysden), p. 80. Mr. Freeman seems to have rightly consigned the Scot invasion to this year, though Simeon dates it earlier. It may have been connected with Ælfhelm's murder, which, if we set aside the story in Florence, would seem rather to form part of a struggle which had been going on during this period between the Deiran and Bernician earls, and which, in spite of Waltheof's displacement by the Witan, ended eventually in the triumph of the latter.

always charged its opponents, with faithlessness, haughtiness, and pride, it owned his intelligence and his eloquent tongue. What is most notable in the charges brought against him is that of low birth. The tendency of the time, as the growing feudalism of the Continent proves, lay the other way; but while rulers like the Norman dukes would not suffer any but men of noble blood at their court, it marked a larger temper in Æthelred when he raised into power this low-born ceorl solely for his wise head and skill of speech.[1] Eadric may thus have been the predecessor, not only of the obscurely-born Godwine before the Conquest, but of the new men whom our Norman kings, in spite of their nobles, called to the council-board after it. From the outset of his administration we feel a firmer hand in the management of affairs. Though the Danes reappeared on the southern coast, Æthelred himself seems to have met them with the land-fyrd; and while avoiding an engagement, to have held them in check through the autumn. On their apparent withdrawal into winter-quarters in the Isle of Wight, the king marched westward to Shrewsbury, and took post on the Severn, no doubt to check the growing turbulence of the Welsh. But the pirates no sooner saw the land clear than they again made a raid as far inland as Berkshire, lighting their war-beacons as they went, and marching along Ashdown as far as the mound of Cuckamsly, as though to

[1] Eadric was known in after-times as "Edricus Streona" (Flor. Worc. (ed. Thorpe), vol. i. p. 158), or "acquisitor" (Orderic. Duchesne, "Hist. Norm. Script." p. 506, B). The nickname evidently alludes to his great accumulations of property.

defy the old proverb, "Men said if they sought to Cwichelmslowe—they never to sea should gang again."[1] The fyrd of the shires was hastily summoned to cut off their retreat; but it was easily brushed aside, and the pirates carried their booty in triumph to their quarters in the Isle of Wight. As they were masters of the sea it was impossible to drive them from this stronghold, and in 1007 Æthelred and the Witan again bought a truce for the heavy sum of thirty thousand pounds.

Measures of defence.

But the two years of peace which this tribute purchased were not thrown away as previous breathing-spaces had been. Reversing his policy of destroying the great ealdormanries, and equally setting aside the tradition of intrusting these governments to the royal kin, Æthelred now set Eadric as ealdorman over Mercia,[2] or rather over all of it save the land of the Hwiccas, whose ealdorman, Leofwine, still sat in the royal councils.[3] Eadric was bound, like the Northumbrian ealdorman, to the interests of the crown by a marriage with one of Æthelred's daughters, and it was doubtless to him that the active measures of political and military organization which distinguish this period were due. A general oath of fidelity to the king was now exacted from every subject, while a promise of just laws and mild government appealed to the loyalty of all. The oath of allegiance was indeed coupled with the same declaration of loyalty to God and the Church.

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 1006. [2] Ibid. 1007.

[3] Leofwine still goes on signing charters with his old precedence.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

But if the hand of Archbishop Ælfheah[1] is seen in the injunctions for a better observance of festivals and Church dues and avoidance of "heathenism,"[2] the more practical mind of Eadric turned to measures of defence.

The fyrd and the fleet.

An attempt was made to give fresh life to the fyrd system by dividing the country into military groups, so that "every eight hides sent a helmet and coat of mail;"[3] by exacting heavy penalties from all who did not come to the hosting at the king's call; and by provisions for a punctual payment of the local contributions which were due for the expenses of forts and bridges, or the defence of the land. More effective steps were taken for the re-organization of the fleet. Nothing is more remarkable throughout Æthelred's reign than the absence of any attempt to meet the Danish ships at sea. It is clear, whatever the cause may have been, that the naval organization of the country had broken down; and it is probable that the small fishing vessels, which were all that the English ports could provide, were unable to cope with the large war vessels now used by the Danes. A special war fleet had in fact to be created; and to create such a fleet it was necessary to call on the resources of the country at large. By the new fleet-law it

[1] Ælfheah was translated from Winchester to Canterbury on the death of Ælfric in 1005. (A. S. G.)

[2] "Ælcne hæthendom mid ealle âweorpan." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws and Inst." i. 313. These ordinances are dated 1008. Mr. Freeman refers to about the same time the decrees of the undated council of Evesham ("Norm. Conq." i. 335).

[3] Eng. Chron. a. 1008.

was provided that every three hundred and ten hides should build and equip a war-ship, and that the fleet should gather round the king once in every year.[1] The law was successfully carried out, and in 1009 Æthelred saw assembled at Sandwich "so many ships as never were before among Angle kin in any king's day."

The Hoard.

The gathering of this fleet is remarkable, not so much in our military as in our financial history. Up to this time the revenue of the crown had been drawn mainly from the rents of its own demesne and the royal dues collected in every shire from thegns who held grants of folk-land. The "Hoard"[2] was made up from other sources of wealth. Here were stored the actual jewels and "ornamenta" of the crown, with such treasures as poured in at the death of bishop or earl or thegn. The best horses went to the king's stable; into his armoury went helmet and coat of mail and spear and sword and shield. With them passed into the hoard the two pounds of the dead thegn or the two hundred mancuses of the dead earl; and beside the coin stood heriots of price, such silver cups as those of Bishop Theodred, the silver vessels of ealdorman Æthelwold, heavy gold rings and gold-hilted swords, costly dishes,

[1] Eng. Chron. 1008, with Earle's note, pp. 336-7. Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 124.

[2] The "*Hoard*" (not yet the "Exchequer") in Eadward's time was settled at Winchester ("Qui debebant geldum portare ad thesaurum regis Wintoniæ," Sim. Durh. "Hist. Eccl. Dunelm." (Twysden), p. 65); in Dunstan's day, as we see from the story of Eadred's death, it was with the king at Glastonbury or elsewhere.

spears twined with gold, palls of silk, and drinking-horns.[1] There too came the costlier chattels forfeited by their owner's treason or desertion in war; the "rings and bright gems" of the treasure-trove, the "finds" in mound or burial-place, in spite of spells and dragon watchers; the bribe or fee for charter or grant, for great offices or bishoprics; the Jew's fine, the widow's marriage dues.[2]

[1] See instances in Kemble, "Sax. in Eng." ii. 99, etc.

[2] Prof. Stubbs ("Const. Hist." i. 142) groups royal revenue—

(*a*) From land. 1. King's private estate, either boc-land, or folk-land, of which he had taken leases of lives. 2. The demesne of the crown, its vills and manors and tuns and boroughs. 3. Rights over folk-land, of feorm-fultum and gifts to dependants. "After the reign of Æthelred this third class of property seems to have merged in the crown-demesne" (ib. 143).

(*b*) Other revenue. 1. Proceeds of courts of law, escheats and forfeitures. 2. Right of maintenance on progress. 3. Wreck and treasure-trove. 4. Mines and salt-works. 5. Tolls, market-dues and port-dues. 6. Heriots and other semi-feudal payments.

Of these, the first division contributed little to the hoard. The payments from private or public lands of the crown were almost wholly in kind. Till the time of Henry I. the tenants on royal demesne paid their dues in kind. Feorm-fultum was not commuted into a money-payment till after the Conquest. It is hard to estimate the revenue drawn from the demesnes of the crown, from the boroughs in demesne, from lands falling in by escheat, whether through treason and confiscation or through death without heirs, from the justice-dues of courts, whether royal or hundred-courts in the royal demesne which the king held as landowner, from ship-money, from fultum, wrecks, &c., market-tolls and port-dues, salt-dues, mines, treasure-trove, compositions for military service. (See Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 88, 117. 143.) But clearly all these made a much larger sum than we commonly think of as the royal revenue of the time. (See Freeman, "Norm. Conq." v. 437-441, 471.)

Feorm-fultum, the tax for the king's sustentation as he went

The land-tax.

But a revenue of this sort was wholly inadequate to meet the new charges of a government which had become national, or the cost of national defence. The ship-levy and the Danegeld were the first beginnings of a national taxation.[1] They were in fact the first forms of that land-tax which constituted the most important element in the national revenue from the days of Æthelred to the days of the Georges. As a national tax levied by the Witan of all England,

through his realm, was in fact a tax for the "civil service," as the whole machinery of government and administration passed with him over the country. The composition for it varied greatly. As it arose from what had been the folk-land, this may vary with the shire. Thus Oxfordshire paid feorm of three nights or £150; Warwick £65 and thirty-six sextaries of honey; Northamptonshire feorm of three nights; Dorset paid feorm of seven days and nights. (Cf. Ellis, "Introd. to Dom." i. 261-2, who adduces others.) The king's demesne—exempt from Danegeld—paid the Feorm. In Dorset the royal manors were grouped for this purpose: three such groups pay each "firma unius noctis," two "dimidia firma unius noctis"; one paid in refined coin—"hoc manerium cum suis pertinentibus reddit 45 libras albas." One sees here a minute and well-organized machinery of finance.

Thus under Æthelred the scheme of taxation stands thus. The royal demesnes, including the towns, bear the cost of the civil service, so far as it had yet been concentrated round the crown. The cost of the military services was borne directly by the thegns, who contributed personal service and whose demesne lands were in return exempted from geld; and indirectly by the general land, which was assessed on a scheme of hideage or proportionate value. "Ship-money" may have been a branch of this land-tax. The later Huscarl-tax of Cnut looks like a diversion of the "feorm-fultum" of the boroughs on which it fell to military services.

[1] "It may be questioned whether any money taxation, properly so-called, ever existed before the imposition of the Danegeld by Æthelred." Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 123.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

and passing into the hands of the king of all England, this tax practically brought home the national idea as it had never been brought home before. Its levy too must have necessitated the preliminary steps of a national survey, and of some record of that survey like the later Domesday book, in which, as it would seem, the hide was taken no longer as a local measure, but as a measure of value. The levy, again, of these taxes could only have been made by the royal reeve in each shire, whose post was thus raised to a higher importance, while their payment into the royal hoard implies that some such administrative machinery as the later exchequer for the due receipt and acquittal of these sums was already in existence, though unnoticed by our chroniclers.

Attack under Thurkill.

It is thus that our financial system traces itself back to the days of Æthelred. But its organization, like the attempt to re-organize the system of national defence, came too late. The country was cowed. During the past twenty years every shire in Wessex had been harried again and again, and if the rest of England had as yet been spared, the pirates had at any rate once carried their ravages over East-Anglia. So utterly had the fyrd system broken down that in the past year, when the Witan of Wessex was gathered together to repel the Danes, none could bethink them how "to drive out" the strangers, and as we have seen, a truce was purchased with hard cash. The attempt to command the sea broke down at the first trial of the new fleet. A detachment of eighty ships sent to clear the coast

of Sussex of an English pirate[1] who was harrying it was dashed to pieces by a storm; and when the news reached the main force under the king[2] the panic was so great that on the withdrawal of Æthelred the fleet went round to London and broke up. The ships had hardly gone home when a Danish squadron appeared in the Thames, ravaging Kent, harrying the Thames valley as far as Oxford, and burning that city. The leader of this force was Thurkill, a son of Strut-Harald, the jarl of Zeeland, and perhaps his father's successor in this jarldom, while his brother Sigwald was jarl at Jomsborg. Both had joined in the vow at Harald's funeral feast; but while the bulk of the Jomsborgers fell in the fight with Jarl Hakon, the two brothers returned unharmed to Denmark; and it was to Thurkill that Swein intrusted forty ships with some three thousand men to carry on the attack on England. Small as the force was, the measures taken to meet it proved utterly ineffective. Even when his fyrd fronted the Danes, Eadric hindered it from engaging,[3] and the wisdom of his caution was shown in the next year, 1010, when Thurkill's force sailed round to East-Anglia, and after a stout fight with Ulfcytel utterly defeated its

[1] A charge brought against this "Child Wulfnoth, the South-Saxon," by Eadric's brother, Brihtnoth, and the flight of Wulfnoth with his ships show the strife that was still going on between the nobles and the "new men" about the king. Eng. Chron. a. 1009.

[2] The Chronicle says, "It was as though all were redeless."

[3] The Chronicle says, "Ealdorman Eadric hindered it, as he ever did," but mentions no other instance. Florence of course greatly expands this entry.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

fyrd. After harrying East-Anglia for three months, and ravaging the whole country to the "wild fens," Thurkill returned to the mouth of the Thames; but in a second raid suddenly swept westward into Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and thence along the Ouse to Bedford; a third took the pirates inland as far as Northampton, where they had burned the town and harried the land before the close of November; and thence passed over the Thames again to plunder Wessex and Wiltshire before returning at midwinter to their ships.

The great tribute.

The rapidity of the Danish movements still as of old baffled resistance. "When they were east, then held men the fyrd west, and when they were at the south, then was our fyrd northwards." The Witan again gathered round Æthelred, and devised how to guard the land. But "though they devised somewhat, that stood not so much as a month." The want of national unity could not be remedied by laws, and what most helped Thurkill was the growth of provincial isolation. All national organization seemed to have broken down.[1] Eadric himself fell back into his own "Myrcenarice," or Mercian realm, as it is still significantly called,[2] which had remained till this last raid of Thurkill's untouched by the pirates; and when a fresh withdrawal of the Danes was purchased by a promise of a yet larger tribute, he seized the moment to secure his

[1] "At last there was no leader that would gather forces, but each fled as he best might; nor at the last would shire help shire." Eng. Chron. 1010.

[2] Eng. Chron. a. 1007.

own western frontier against the Welsh, whose attacks must have been roused by the raids of the pirates, and carried his ravages along the whole Welsh coast as far as St. David's. But while he was busy with the Welsh Æthelred had failed to pay the tribute, and Thurkill again swooped upon Canterbury, sacked the town and seized Archbishop Ælfheah as a hostage for its payment.[1] Fresh promises were made, and in the spring of 1012 the Witan again met to provide the sum. An outbreak of drunken wrath, indeed, deprived the Danes of their hostage, for on his refusal to redeem himself Ælfheah was pelted by the drunken warriors with stones and ox-horns till one more pitiful clave his head with an axe. In spite, however, of this brutal deed the great tribute was paid, and the Danish fleet at last sailed away from the English coast.

Conquest of Swein.

Their leader Thurkill however remained with forty-five ships as a mercenary in English pay.[2] The humiliation indeed to which the realm had stooped in the payment of the great tribute had been forced on it by more than its terror of Thurkill's force, for it must have been known now that a far more terrible attack under Swein himself was preparing in the North. In July, 1013, Swein appeared off the coast, and after landing at Sandwich suddenly entered the Humber. The size and number of his ships, the splendour of their equipment, the towers on their forecastles, the

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 1011.

[2] Ibid. 1012. The "Encomium Emmæ" (Langebek), ii. 475, represents the desertion of Thurkill and his detention of Swein's ships as a cause of Swein's after attack.

lions, eagles, and dragons of gold and silver which glittered on their topmasts, their brazen beaks, the colours that decked their keels,[1] showed that his aim was no mere plunder-raid. The time had in fact come for the conquest of England. Wessex, spent with the long strife, lay helpless and inactive, while Swein called on the Danelaw to finish the work which had been so long held in check by the vigour of the house of Ælfred. But even Ælfred or Eadward would have failed to check it had it been backed, as now, by the armed force of Denmark itself. All was in fact over when the presence of Earl Uhtred with his Northumbrians in Swein's camp announced that the Danelaw had risen. The fiction of a single England, of an English Empire throughout Britain, which the clerks of Winchester had dressed up in the pompous titles of their charters, disappeared like a dream. The great ealdormen again showed themselves in their true light as disintegrating forces. The Northumbrian earl joined Swein as an independent power. The East-Anglian ealdorman followed his example. The Lindsey folk and the Five Boroughs, all England north of Watling Street, submitted to him at Gainsborough, and hostages were delivered to him from every shire. Eadric seems to have withdrawn into his own Mercian ealdormanry along the Severn, and to have stood apart from the struggle. From Emperor and Lord of Britain Æthelred saw himself shrink at the hard touch of reality into a King of Wessex, and of a Wessex helpless before the junction of the rest of Britain with a foreign foe.

[1] "Encom. Emmæ" (Langebek), ii. 476.

Flight of Æthelred.

Resistance was in fact impossible. Master without a blow of Northern and Midland Britain, Swein horsed his host, and gathering the fyrd of the shires which adhered to him, marched southward. "After they came over Watling Street they wrought the most evil that any host might do."[1] By Oxford he passed into the heart of Wessex, where Winchester submitted to his arms. From Winchester he turned upon London, into which Æthelred and Thurkill had thrown themselves. But the town made a vigorous defence, and Swein was forced to fall back to Wallingford for a passage over the Thames to Bath, to complete his work by the reduction of Wessex. The submission of Winchester had carried with it that of the Central Provinces, whose ealdorman, Ælfric, still clung to the court. But the Western Provinces, the Wessex beyond Selwood where Ælfred had rallied his men at the last moment of the fight with Guthrum, remained unconquered under Æthelmær, who a few years back had succeeded Æthelweard as ealdorman.[2] But even in this heart of West-Saxon life provincial was stronger than national feeling. At Bath Swein was met by Æthelmær and the western thegns; and their submission left him lord of all England. London itself, left alone in its resistance, sent hostages to the Danish king, while Æthelred after sending Emma and her two boys to their uncle, Duke Richard, took refuge in Thurkill's squadron, and after hovering through the early winter off the coast

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 1013.

[2] Ibid. a. 1013. Æthelweard disappears from the charters in 999.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

Its results.

sailed in despair at Christmas-tide to join them in Normandy.

With the flight of the king ended the long effort of Wessex to maintain her supremacy over Britain. It had indeed other issues little foreseen at the moment, for it was the Norman influences which from this time surrounded the English royal house that prepared the way for the presence of the Norman in England itself. Æthelred's two boys were from this time dwellers not on English but on Norman soil. From childhood to manhood they grew up as Normans among their Norman kinsfolk. Ælfred, the elder of them, was to return to England with Norman soldiers to claim his father's realm, to perish on the ground he claimed, and to leave a heritage of revenge amongst the Normans against Englishmen which only slaked itself in the bloodshed of Senlac. The fortunes of his brother Eadward were destined to be yet more fatal to England. Bred and sheltered in the Norman land till its temper and language became his own, he came as a Norman to the English throne, and the reign of the Normanized Confessor brought with it as an inevitable necessity the Norman conquest of England.

Death of Swein.

Had Æthelred delayed his flight but for a month the scene would suddenly have changed. At the opening of February, 1014, Swein died suddenly at Gainsborough, and his death at once broke the spell of terror which had fallen on the land. The Witan gathered to send letters over sea to Æthelred bidding him know that "no lord was more dear to them than their own lord, if he would hold them in rightlier wise than he did aforetime." The terms were accepted.

Æthelred sent Eadmund with pledges that he would be a faithful lord to them and amend all they hated; "they then established full friendship by word and pledge on either half, and declared every Danish king an outlaw from England for ever." Leaving Emma and her two children at Richard's court, the king at once put to sea, to receive a joyous welcome in London, and hastily gathering troops marched upon Gainsborough, where the Danish host had chosen Cnut, Swein's young son, for king. Cnut was in fact already bargaining with the men of Lindsey for aid in a joint raid on the south, but before Æthelred's vigorous attack he forsook Britain and sailed away to his northern home.

Cnut's invasion.

It may be doubted, indeed, whether his return to the north was due as much to the attack of Æthelred as to the news that another son of Swein, Harald, had already mounted the Danish throne. It is said that an arrangement was made between the brothers by the wisdom of Thurkill, who proposed that Harald should rule in Denmark while Cnut returned to conquer England. However this may have been, it is certain Thurkill quitted Æthelred—it may be this was in itself a part of the bargain between the king and his subjects—and in the coming struggle fought side by side with his own northern folk. Cnut's ambition can have needed little urging to the winning of a land twice the size of his own Denmark, and vastly greater in wealth and population. His vigour showed itself in the rapidity with which a fleet even more numerous and splendid than his father's gathered in 1015 for a fresh attack on Britain.

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

Fortune already favoured his cause. The loss of Thurkill's military force was not made up by national vigour. The union which had been sealed by solemn pact between Æthelred and his Witan was already at an end; the English court was again torn with strife; and though the king himself, who was drawing fast to the death which followed in the coming year, could take little part in the struggle, the fight he had fought against the great nobles was taken up fiercely by his son. The contest between Eadmund and ealdorman Eadric proved more fatal to England than any of its predecessors. Of the origin or real nature of the quarrel we know nothing, but Eadmund seems to have revolted against the power which Eadric exercised over the king. Its first outbreak was at the Witenagemot at Oxford, where Eadric is said to have drawn two "chief thegns of the Seven Boroughs" into his chamber and to have slain them. The thegns may have been supporters of Eadmund, for after a short while Eadmund, against his father's will, took the widow of one of them to wife, seized their lands, and made himself head of their people.[1]

Dissensions in England.

The quarrel had just broken out when Cnut appeared ravaging the Wessex coast, and its results at once showed themselves in the old fatal discord in the face of the national enemy. The host gathered to meet Cnut under Eadric, but no sooner had Eadmund joined it with forces from the North than charges of treachery parted the two leaders, and the English army broke

[1] Eng. Chron. a. 1015. As these lands were in Ælfric's ealdormanry this may have been an effort to break up the ealdorman's power at home, but we have no means of deciding the matter.

up without any fight. A yet more fatal issue followed. Æthelred must now have been dying, and Eadric, conscious that his death would leave him in the hands of a king who was his avowed enemy, saw no resource save one. He joined Cnut with forty ships, and the balance of the war turned at once in favour of the Dane. The men of Wessex submitted to him, and with the opening of the year 1016 his host advanced across the Thames, ravaging at its will. It was in vain that Eadmund gathered forces to oppose Cnut and Eadric, for the army was no sooner assembled than it refused to march without the king; and when Æthelred joined his son, and a more stringent summons called men to the royal standard, the general distrust still paralyzed action. "It was made known to the king that men would betray him;" and Æthelred sailed again in terror to London, while his son fell back on Northumbria and sought aid from his brother-in-law, Earl Uhtred. Their joint army however broke up as soon as Cnut, who had been wasting eastern Mercia unopposed, advanced by Lincoln upon York, and while Uhtred and the Northumbrians submitted to the conqueror, Eadmund fled to join his father in London.

Eadmund Ironside.

It was at this moment that London first took the leading part in English history which it has maintained ever since. The city stood alone in its loyalty to the house of Cerdic, for almost all England from the Channel to the Forth had now bowed to the Dane. But the spirit of its burghers remained unbroken. As Cnut and Eadric advanced from the north to complete their work by a siege of the town, Æthelred died

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

988-1016.

within its walls in April 1016; but Eadmund was at once chosen king by those of the Witan who remained with him and by the Londoners. Once crowned, he showed a temper worthy of his line. Quitting London before its investment he hurried into Somerset and Devon, the only shires that still clung to him, where his presence roused part at least of the West-Saxons from their apathy, and again returned with a small force to the relief of the town, which, though girt by a great trench and repeatedly attacked, held its assailants stoutly at bay. The news of his advance forced Cnut to leave the besieging army round London, and to march with an English host under Eadric and two other ealdormen to meet the king. Two indecisive engagements on the borders of Wiltshire were followed by the withdrawal of both the fighting forces; but rapidly gathering a greater host Eadmund took advantage of the opening left by Cnut's retreat, and striking along the north bank of the Thames succeeded in his aim. London was relieved and the besiegers were driven to their ships and beaten in a sally at Brentford. The relief indeed was only for a moment; Eadmund retreated again to the west, and Cnut drew his levies again round about London. But his renewed attack was as unsuccessful as his old; and the Danish host were at last forced by want of supplies to break up the siege.

Assandun.

The failure gave fresh strength and hope to Eadmund. While Cnut ravaged in Mercia and coasted back with less spirit to the Medway, the young king again advanced with his forces from the west, broke up the Danish quarters in Kent, and drove their host

into the Isle of Sheppey. The change of fortune was seen in Eadric's change of attitude. From the hour of strife after Eadmund's marriage Eadric had stood firmly by the Danes. But with the progress of the struggle, and the developement of the king's noble qualities, the family ties which bound Eadric to his royal brother-in-law regained their power. It may be too that Eadric already discerned Cnut's jealousy of his influence, and that he was shaken by the murder of his brother-in-law, Uhtred of Northumbria, who had been slain after his submission, and his earldom given to Eric the Norwegian. Whatever was the ground of his resolve, king and ealdorman now met at Aylesford, and Eadric forsook Cnut to resume his place beside Eadmund Ironside, as he was now called for his "snell schipe." The accession of strength which his junction gave Eadmund spurred the king to a decisive struggle. His force indeed had now swelled from the "fyrd" of a couple of shires such as fought at Pen and Sherstone to a national host, for Eadric brought him the Mercians even to the Magesætas of Herefordshire, while Ulfcytel had joined him with the East-Anglians, who had already exchanged such hard blows with the Danes at Maldon. Eadmund marched resolutely on Cnut's army, which had crossed the Thames and was slowly withdrawing through Essex. He forced it to engage at Assandun, on a swampy field along the Crouch. The fight was a stubborn one; the sun set on the still struggling hosts, but the day went against the English army. Its loss was terrible. The two chiefs of East-Anglia, Ulfcytel and Æthelweard, the son of Æthelwine, lay

CHAP. VIII.

The Danish Conquest.

A.D. 1016.

amidst a host of dead. "All the English nobles were slain," says the chronicler. The old jealousies and suspicions indeed raged even on the battle-field. The reconciliation with Eadric had been sullenly submitted to by Eadmund's West-Saxon followers, and their ill-will broke out in a charge that Eadric and his men were the first to fly from the field of Assandun. But in spite of these charges of treason it was Eadric who was now Eadmund's only hope. The king fell back with the ealdorman on the Severn, pursued by Cnut as soon as he learnt the line of his retreat, and it was by Eadric's interposition that further conflict was averted. Pledges and oaths were given by the two rivals to each other in the Isle of Olney in the Severn by Deerhurst, and the realm was divided between the English and the Danish leaders as in Ælfred's day, Wessex and the English Mercia remaining to Eadmund.[1] But the strain and failure of his seven months' reign proved fatal to the young king. He shared, no doubt, the weak constitution of his race, and at the close of November his body was borne to Glastonbury to lie beside his grandfather Eadgar.

[1] The Encomium and Florence of Worcester make Cnut fall back on London, and Henry of Huntingdon says, "Lundoniam et sceptra cepit regalia," p. 185 (ed. Arnold).

CHAPTER IX.

THE REIGN OF CNUT.

1016—1035.

The rule of Cnut.

WITH the death of Eadmund the whole aspect of English affairs suddenly changed. The land which had seemed under Æthelred but a bundle of isolated shires, and whose fortunes had been the sport of warring ealdormen, became a great and tranquil nation owning from end to end the supremacy of the crown. The secret of the change lay in more than the exhaustion and the passion for rest which always follow a period of weary strife; it was that the country now found itself in the hands of a great ruler. Cnut was still in the first flush of youth, for he was but twenty-two when the death of his rival left him unchallenged king of all England, and his temper, so far as it had yet been seen, promised little more than a brutal conqueror. Quick in seizing the decisive point of attack in his siege of London, and stubborn in holding it, he had proved himself indeed a born general, as great on the battle field as in the plan of his campaign. But the skill and bravery of the northman seemed linked in him to the northman's ruthlessness. Men

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut, 1016-1035.

remembered the pitiless cruelty which was so long to sully his greatness, when three years before in his retreat from Gainsborough he had mutilated and set ashore the hostages whom Swein had taken to secure the loyalty of Englishmen. And in the first months of his rule the same stern temper was shown in the measures by which his authority was secured. Policy, indeed, had its share with cruelty in the blood-shedding with which the reign opened. The new king's hand fell heavily on the great nobles whose strife had been the weakness of the crown. The two ealdormen of East-Anglia lay dead at Assandun. The sons-in-law of Æthelred who held north and middle England in their hands met a like fate; for a murder rid Cnut of Uhtred the ealdorman of Northumbria; while Eadric of Mercia, whom the division of the realm had left all powerful, was summoned to the court at Eadmund's death and fell by an axe-blow at the king's signal. Before the year was out three other nobles of dangerous rank and position had been condemned and slain at London.

His marriage.

England indeed lay crushed and helpless under the rule of its foreign master; for if Mercia was placed after Eadric's death in the hands of the English ealdorman Leofwine, Northumbria was given to the Norwegian Eric, and East-Anglia to the Dane Thurkill, while Wessex was held by the conqueror himself. Nor was Cnut less ruthless in the steps by which he secured his throne against the house of Cerdic. Murder removed a brother of Eadmund Ironside, while Eadmund's children were hunted into Hungary by his pitiless hate. But the removal of

these rivals still left Cnut uneasy on his throne. Æthelred's two sons by his marriage with Emma, Ælfred and Eadward, had remained with their mother at the court of Rouen; and Richard the Good, hampered though he was with border wars, was too dangerous a foe to neglect. The young Normans who, weary of peace and order, were just now following Roger de Toesny to Spain for a blow at the Moslem, would as soon have followed him to England to strike a blow for their duke's nephews. But Cnut matched the marriage policy of Æthelred with a marriage policy of his own. Young as he was, he was perhaps already father by an earlier wife of two children, Swein and Harald; but these with their mother were set aside, and the king sought for wife Æthelred's widow and the mother of his only rivals, Emma herself. Emma was ten years older than her new wooer, but her consent seems to have been quickly given, and her brother, the Norman duke, would naturally see in this new alliance the advantage he had seen in the old.

The Danish Conquest.

With the murder of Eadric and the marriage of Emma all danger of a disputed throne was at an end; and with the passing away of his dread, the nobler and grander features of Cnut's temper were to develope themselves. The conqueror rose suddenly into a wise and temperate king. In nothing did his greatness show itself more clearly than in his anxiety to obliterate from men's minds the foreign character of his rule. At first sight indeed his triumph appeared to be a crowning of the long effort which the northmen had been making for

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

two hundred years to win Britain for their own; for in spite of Ælfred's struggle and of the victories of his sons, it seemed as though a Danish conquest and the rule of a Danish king had won the land for the Dane. It would be hard to overrate the results of such a winning. England would have been torn from all union with western Christendom; it would have sunk into one of the Scandinavian realms; and its fortunes would have been linked with those of Northern Europe. Nor would the results of such a change have been simply political, for the country would have been cut off from the enlightenment and civilization which its actual relations with the west were slowly introducing, while Scandinavia, whose lands were even now hardly emerging from barbarism, had no new element of progress to offer. But what might have been possible a hundred years before was impossible now. The success of the Dane had in fact come too late. Had Ælfred failed to arrest Guthrum's conquest our whole history might have changed. In spite of its union under Ecgberht England was then but a mass of isolated kingdoms without national consciousness or national cohesion. Once at the northman's feet, there was little to prevent it from becoming a northman's land, like its own Danelaw or like the Normandy at the mouth of Seine, a land where the bulk of the ruling class would have been Scandinavians, and whose local position would have made possible, what local position made impossible for Normandy, that it should be linked politically with the Scandinavian realm. But what might have been in Ælfred's day

could no longer be now. The work of a hundred years had made the country a single England. The long war had kindled a national consciousness, and had brought about a national union, which no defeat could undo. The victories and the greatness of the house of Ælfred had begotten a pride in the English name, while the peace and prosperity of reigns like those of Æthelstan or Eadgar had raised the land to a new wealth, a new industrial energy. Political feuds might lay such a land at the feet of a Scandinavian ruler, but it was impossible that it could henceforth live a merely Scandinavian life.

Its character.

The conditions, too, under which a nation loses its older identity, were no longer present. The social and political traditions of the English people were henceforth in no danger of being merged and lost in the customs of its conquerors. Had the pirates won a hundred years back their settlement in England would have been an element of the first importance in determining its political character. The earlier Danish conquerors were colonists as well as conquerors, and settlers in the lands they won. But the old period of dispersion, of wandering, of colonization, was over for the Scandinavian peoples. Their revolutions at home had built up the petty realms of the North into great monarchies, whose military force had been shown in the conquest of England. But with these revolutions the migration and settlement of the sea-rovers had ceased. The colonists of the Danelaw had been fairly absorbed in the English people, and Cnut's conquest brought no new settlers. Guthrum was the head of a host which settled on

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

Its results.

the soil which Guthrum won. Cnut was the general of an army which sailed back again homewards when its war work was done.

The result of the Danish conquest was in fact the very reverse of what it seemed destined to be. It was not Scandinavia that drew England to it, it was England that was brought to wield a new influence over Scandinavia. The North was governed by orders from Winchester. Cnut's northern realms sank into under-kingdoms, ruled by under-kings; Denmark by one of his young sons, Norway in later days by another. It was with English troops that Cnut sailed at long intervals to repress revolt in the northern seas, to fight the Wends, to annex Norway to his Danish realm. It was by despatching English bishops and English preachers to the North that he pushed on the work of its civilization and its conversion to Christianity. The Danes who remained with the king in England held only subordinate offices. Even those whom he had rewarded with high rank in the first flush of victory, were gradually set aside for men of English blood. Thurkill was driven from the land only four years after he had entered on his earldom of East-Anglia;[1] Cnut's nephew, Hakon, was sent to rule in Norway;[2] while of his two brothers-in-law, one, Earl Ulf, quitted England to bear rule in Denmark,[3] and a second, Earl Eric, was stripped of his power in Northumbria and banished from the realm.[4]

[1] In 1021. Eng. Chron. (A. S. G.)

[2] In 1029. (A. S. G.) [3] Probably in 1019. (A. S. G.)

[4] The last charter signed by Eric is in 1023. Cod. Dip. 1239. (A. S. G.)

The policy of Cnut.

Cnut was himself the most prominent sign of the influence of England on its Danish conquerors. With the instinct of genius, the young king from almost the first moment of his reign cast off the Dane to stand before his people as an English ruler. Fresh from the bloodshed of Assandun, fresh from the brutal murders which secured his throne, Cnut threw himself on the loyalty of his English subjects. Of the fleet and host which had brought England to his feet, he kept but forty ships and a few thousands of hus-carls, a paid body-guard which was strong enough to check isolated disaffection but helpless against a national revolt. By the summons of the bishops, ealdormen, and thegns to a great assembly on Eadmund's death, he showed that his authority was henceforth to rest not on force of arms but on law and custom. The solemn choice and crowning of Cnut at London stamped him in the eyes of the people at large as an English king rather than a foreign master; while his formal renewal of Eadgar's laws in a Witenagemot at Oxford, marked his resolve to rule in English fashion. How completely indeed he had already identified himself with his new English realm we see from his relations with his Danish kingdom.[1] If he visited it during the winter of 1019-20, it was but to make such arrangements as left Denmark practically a sub-kingdom, whose interests were subordinated to those of England. Jarl

[1] Denmark probably passed to Cnut little more than a year after his coronation as king of the English if his brother Harald died about 1018. Dahlmann, "Geschichte von Dannemark," i. 105. (A. S. G.)

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016. 1035.

Ulf, who was bound to the throne by his marriage with the king's sister Estrith,[1] was placed as governor over Cnut's hereditary kingdom, which henceforth saw itself ruled by orders from a king transformed from a Dane into an Englishman, and reigning at Winchester. With the early spring Cnut was back in England, and save for this and perhaps one other brief absence, the first eight years of his reign seem to have been spent in the settlement of English affairs.

His government.

The pledge he gave at the outset of his reign that he would rule after Eadgar's law, that he would be true—in modern phrase—to the traditional constitution and usages of the realm, was religiously observed. The laws he enacted later followed those of his predecessors. The structure of government, the control of the Witan, the rule of ealdorman and bishop, the jurisdiction of shire-moot and hundred-moot and town-moot, remained unchanged. The royal progresses were diligently carried on, when the king, with his following of counsellors and scribes, administered justice and redressed wrong as Eadgar and Ælfred had done before him. The old organization of the country too was gradually restored, and the more galling marks of foreign rule done away. Englishmen were set over the great earldoms; and even the traditional connexions of the ruling houses were respected. The new earl of Mercia, Leofwine, had before been ealdorman of the Mercian district of

[1] This cannot have been later than 1019, as the age of Swein Estrithson shows. Dahlmann, "Geschichte von Dannemark." (A. S. G.)

the Hwiccas, and was succeeded in this post by his son Leofric; and when Eric the Norwegian was driven into exile, Eadwulf, a brother of the murdered ealdorman Uhtred, was suffered to hold the hereditary possession of his house as Earl of Northumbria. Wessex remained for a time the special district of the king. But when, in 1020, possibly as a result of the addition of the Danish monarchy to his English realm, and the administrative difficulties which this brought about, Cnut formed it into an earldom, it was the English Godwine whom he chose for its ruler.

Godwine.

From the outset of his reign the king had shown favour to Godwine, a thegn of West-Saxon blood, but whose parentage and rank are utterly unknown. The tradition of a humble origin, and his position at the court, show that Cnut was imitating Æthelred's policy in raising "new men" to high place in the royal councils. But whatever may have been his early rank, the ability Godwine showed both in the field and at the council board, his eloquence, his pleasant and ready temper, and his laborious industry, were soon rewarded with the hand of Gytha, the sister of jarl Ulf, who was himself wedded to the sister of Cnut. Such an alliance brought the new favourite near to the throne itself; but it was the prelude to yet greater honours. From 1020 he became the chief councillor of the king; he held an important office as governor of the realm in Cnut's absence during the wars in the north, and he probably possessed the earldom of Wessex with which we find him invested at Cnut's death. By that time, as his signatures show, he ranked first

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

among the English nobles, and before even the kinsmen of the king, while his wealth was enormous and his possessions extended over nearly every shire of southern and central England.

The ealdormen.

The history of England in fact under its Danish conquerors was really a developement of those institutions, whether administrative, fiscal, or judicial, which had been growing into shape under its West-Saxon kings. The conquest brought no violent interruption to this developement—rather, by the social and political revolution it wrought, it enabled the conqueror to carry out the work of his predecessors more rapidly and completely than would have been possible without so great a shock. In the local organization of the realm the circumstances of Cnut's conquest left him no choice but to carry out in its entirety that change in the character of the great provincial governments which had been attempted by Æthelred in the case of Mercia. Æthelred's policy had implied the breaking down of the traditional West-Saxon system of the government of these dependencies by men of royal blood, and the appointment of ordinary delegates of the crown. Under Cnut this system was rapidly extended. The ealdormanries were changed into earldoms and the earls into pure nominees and dependents of the crown, a transformation which was marked by their summary displacement and replacement in their posts; and the policy of Æthelred, adopted first by his Danish successor, was finally made the basis of the system of the Norman Conqueror.

The administrative system, too, had been taking

System of administration.

new form under Æthelred, and the stormy character of his reign had shown the difficulties that attended the change. In his youth indeed when little alteration seems to have been made, government was still in the hands of one of the great ealdormen, and even after the king had arrived at full power, Archbishop Sigeric seems to have retained something of the same position of standing councillor of the realm which Dunstan had identified with the office of the primate. But as years drew on the appearance of a new officer at court, the High Thegn, marked the beginning of an attempt on the part of the king to supersede the traditional and constitutional advisers by ministers of a more modern type chosen by and dependent on himself. Some such modification had become absolutely necessary under the conditions of the new English kingdom. With the increasing demands for government and administration over so wide an area, and the growing complexity of England's foreign relations, the need of a continuous ministry in constant communication with the king made itself more and more felt, and unpopular as was the institution of the head thegn, it became of the first importance from the wide extent of the empire over which Cnut ruled, and the necessity of delegating his authority during any absence from his English dominions. The office indeed was not only continued by Cnut, but raised by him into a prominence it never afterwards lost. The transformation of the head thegn into a "Secundarius Regis" in the person of Godwine, marked a step towards the creation of the later Justiciary and of the ministerial

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

The king's chaplains.

system which lasted on to the close of the Angevin reigns.

With the creation, however, of such an officer the system of Dunstan came practically to an end. The primate retained his position as councillor of the realm in virtue of his representation of the liberties of the Church and of the people, but his power was that of a constitutional check, not of a minister of the crown; while the earls were only summoned to the three great Witenagemots to counsel on the affairs of the realm. The ordinary administration lay therefore wholly in the hands of the king and of his ministers. But for the carrying out of the details of government a staff of secretaries had now become necessary, and there are found from this time in the king's chaplains a group of men, some of whom were foreigners, like Duduc, who may have been chosen specially with a view to the transaction of foreign affairs, while others, like Stigand, were Englishmen; but all of whom were clearly picked men, and, as we see when they appear as bishops in later days, men of ability. The reward for their work was in most cases an episcopal see, and from now right up to the Reformation, service at the royal council-board became the ordinary road to a bishopric. It was to this fact that the English episcopate from this time owed its peculiarly political character and its close relations to the crown, and hence the institution of the "Royal Chapel" is one of the most important landmarks in our ecclesiastical history. But politically its effects were far greater. Administration, indeed, in any true sense was now

for the first time made really possible by the existence of a body of selected and trained administrators, constantly at work, and always at the disposal of the crown for fiscal, political, or judicial purposes, a body which, reappearing in the justiciary and his ring of assistant secretaries, formed the nucleus of that permanent royal council out of which all our judicial institutions, and to some extent our parliament itself, has sprung.

Taxation.

Of even greater moment than Æthelred's administrative changes was his fiscal revolution. The establishment of a land-tax had been attributed in popular fancy to the need of paying Danish tribute, as its name of Danegeld shows. But its continuance from this moment, whether Danes were in the land or no, shows that the need of meeting their demands had only forced to the front a financial measure which had become inevitable, and which was necessarily carried on under Æthelred's successors. The land-tax thus imposed formed the chief resource of the crown till the time of the Angevins; and though the taxation of personalty was introduced by Henry II., the land-tax still remained the main basis of English finance till the beginning of the eighteenth century. Its direct effects from the first in furnishing the crown with a large and continuous revenue gave a new strength to the monarchy, while its universal levy over every hide in the realm must have strengthened the national feeling.

The hus-carls.

To these two main bases of the royal power, a permanent administration and a fixed revenue, Cnut added a third even more directly important engine

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

of government in the institution of the hus-carls. The tendency to provincial isolation, the temptation of the ealdormen to sheer off into independent princes, remained as strong as in Æthelred's day. But now for the first time the king had an armed force ready at his call. The hus-carls whom Cnut retained as a body-guard when he sent home the bulk of his Danish host, three or six thousand men as they were, were too few to hold the land against a national revolt. But they were a force strong enough to repress local rebellion; they furnished a disciplined nucleus for the fyrd to gather round; in the field they gave the king a new position as general among his warring lieutenants; and in more tranquil times they raised him high above the local governors, who had no force save the hasty levy of shire and province at their call. The strength which was given to the French crown by its "archers" in days long after was given to the English crown by the hus-carls. Continued by Cnut's successors to the Norman Conquest, imitated by the Norman kings in the "paid knights" who held themselves at the king's call, it was in great part to their existence that the new tranquillity which from this time characterized England must have been due.

Cnut and the Church.

Still more significant of Cnut's temper than his developement of the existing civil organization of the realm, were his dealings with the Church. His aim seemed to be not only to wipe away the memory of the stern deeds by which he had won his throne, but to identify himself even with the patriotism which had withstood the stranger. The saints he honoured

were saints who had won martyrdom at the hands of the Danes. Eadmund of East-Anglia was the martyr of the early Danish conquest, and Cnut refounded the abbey which had grown up over his tomb. Archbishop Ælfheah was the martyr of the later Danish conquest, when the host of Thurkill harried the land; and Cnut followed the saint's body in its translation to Canterbury.[1] On the hill of Assandun the king built a church[2] which commemorated alike the men who had fallen in fight for him, and those who had fallen in fight for Eadmund; while with a still more marked intent he made his way in later days as a pilgrim to Glastonbury that he might spread a gorgeous pall over Eadmund's tomb.[3] The religious houses of Ely and Ramsey, the resting-places of Englishmen slain at Maldon and Assandun, were especially enriched by his gifts; and the names of Dunstan and Eadward the Martyr were honoured by the anniversaries he instituted in their memory. Nor were these acts of Cnut's mere stratagems to break the nation's discontent at a stranger's rule. They were the signs of a settled policy, and of a policy which sprang from the temper of the king. Scarcely had the Danish kingdom fallen to him when he began to carry out the same work there. English priests were sent to fill the Danish bishoprics; even Roeskilde by Lethra, the old royal seat of the first Danish kings, received its bishop from England consecrated by an English primate. Indeed the change

[1] In 1023. (A. S. G.)
[2] Begun in 1020, finished in 1032. (A. S. G.)
[3] In 1032. (A. S. G.)

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

which had turned Normans into Frenchmen, and men of the Danelaw into Englishmen, was seen working with a startling suddenness in Cnut himself. He had the northman's gift of adaptation, the gift of absorbing the character and fashions of the men about him; and in him the change was made the easier by his youthfulness. Within the young king's heart indeed the wild passions of the North slumbered rather than died. In his own fatherland, on his own native seas, if northern legend may be trusted, they leapt into fresh life. The Cnut of the Sagas is to the last the Cnut of the wars with Eadmund, vigorous, unscrupulous, passionate, revengeful, thirsty of blood. But the wild mood was hushed on English ground. The traditions, the songs which told of him in after time to Englishmen, were peaceful, gentle, even familiar in tone. "Merrily sang the monks in Ely as Cnut King rowed by," runs a verse of one of these songs which has floated down to us across the ages to tell how the music-loving king bade his men row near one of his favourite religious houses, "Row, cnihtes, near the land, and hear we these monks sing."

Peace of the land.

Cnut's greatest gift to his people was that of peace. All fear of the pirates was henceforth at an end. The Dane was no longer an enemy. Danish fleets no longer hung off the coasts. On the contrary, it was English ships and English soldiers who now followed Cnut in his northern wars. With him began the long internal tranquillity which was from this time to be the special note of our national history. For seventeen years the country rested in profound repose. There were troubles indeed in the Welsh

marches; and a raid of the Scots wrought evil in Northumbria. But with these slight exceptions the land was untroubled from without. The absence of discontent is proved by the quiet of the country during the long periods of Cnut's absence in the North in the latter part of his reign. Such an internal tranquillity came no doubt in great measure from the exhaustion of the country, from that craving for peace and order which follows on long periods of anarchy, and which gives a new strength to the crown. But the temper, the greatness of Cnut, must have counted for much. The tendency to a semi-feudalism which had baffled Æthelred was held sternly down. The murder of Eadric showed how ruthlessly Cnut meant to deal with any attempt at independence, while in the banishment of Eric and Thurkill it was seen that the new earls held their posts solely at the king's will. The political instinct of Cnut too trusted to something more than personal dread; for in the efficiency of the hus-carls he found a ready and irresistible means of enforcing the common decisions of the government.

Cnut's temper.

But behind the material forces by which the power of the crown was guarded, and breathing life into the strict fulfilment of his pledge to rule according to the laws of the English kings, was Cnut's own resolve to govern rightly. In him, as in Ælfred, we are able to reach to the very heart of the man by the fortune which has preserved to us the king's own words. After ten years of rule he addressed his people from the foreign land where he was then in pilgrimage, in a letter memorable as the first personal address of

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

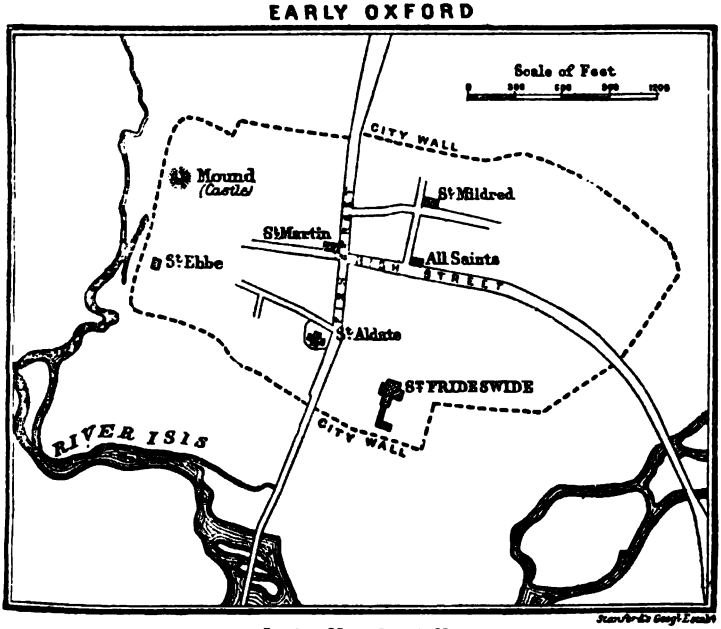
an English king to Englishmen which has reached us, but even more memorable for the light it throws on the simple grandeur of his character and the noble conception he had formed of kingship. "I have vowed to God to lead a right life in all things," he wrote, "to rule justly and piously my realms and subjects, and to administer just judgement to all. If heretofore I have done aught beyond what was just, through headiness or negligence of youth, I am ready with God's help to amend it utterly." No royal officer, either for fear of the king or for favour to any, is to consent to injustice; none is to do wrong to rich or poor "as they prize my friendship and their own welfare." He especially denounces unjust exactions: "I have no need that money be heaped together for me by unjust demands." "I have sent this letter before me," ends the young king—he was still little more than thirty—"that all the people of my realm may rejoice in my well-doing; for as you yourselves know, never have I spared nor will I spare to spend myself and my toil in what is needful and good for my people."

Oxford.

One of the most important results of the long peace under Cnut, and of the new connexion with the Scandinavian countries which was brought about by his rule, was the developement of English trade and commerce. As yet indeed the inland trade of the country was very small. The rivers were its roads, and it was along the rivers that the trading towns for the most part sprang up. But though the Thames was already a waterway by which London could communicate with the heart of England, no

town save Oxford had as yet arisen along its course. The name of the place tells the story of its birth. At a point where the Thames suddenly bends for a while to the south, and just before its waters are swollen by those of the Cherwell, a wide and shallow reach of the river offered a ford by which the cattle-drovers from Wessex could cross the stream, and

EARLY OXFORD



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traversing the marshy fields which edged it, mount the low slope of a gravel spit between the two rivers that formed the site of the latter city. On this slope a house of secular canons had grown up by the close of the ninth century round the tomb of a local saint, Fritheswith or Frideswide; and at the point where

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

the road, reaching its summit, broke into three branches, to run northward, eastward, and westward, a little town furnished the germ of the future Oxford. It probably extended only over the site of three of its later parishes, that of St. Martin, whose claims to be the earliest of its churches were confirmed by its recognition as the "city church" and by the meeting of the Portmannimot in its churchyard;[1] that of St. Mildred,[2] whose name shows its Mercian date; and the parish of All Hallows between them; while it was linked to the ford by a thin line of houses, the later Fish Street, with a church of St. Aldad or Aldate in the midst of it. The little borough was probably extending its bounds to the westward over the ground marked by the parish of St. Ebbe[3] when Ælfred established his mint there; and the presence of a mint shows that it was already a place of some importance. The loss of London and of the lower Thames valley in the Danish wars had in fact made it a border-town of the Mercian ealdormanry after the peace of Wedmore; and the mound upon which its castle-keep was afterwards reared may have been among the first of those works of fortification by which Æthelred and his Lady held their own

[1] A charter (Hist. Mon. Abingdon (ed. Stevenson), i. 439) shows the church to be older than Cnut's day.

[2] The site of this parish is now covered by Lincoln and Exeter colleges. Mildred, who died towards the close of the seventh century, was niece of Wulfhere of Mercia, and one of the most noted of the old English saints. (A. S. G.)

[3] As Ebbe was martyred in 870, the churches of her dedication generally mark the revival under Ælfred and his children, and so their parishes may be assigned to this time.

against the Danes. As from this time it grew in importance and wealth, Oxford divided with London the traffic along the Thames: we catch our first glimpse of its burghers when an abbot of Abingdon, in return for a toll of herrings which their barges paid in passing, consented to cut a new channel for their transit.[1]

Nottingham.

What Oxford had become to the trade of the Thames, Torksey and Nottingham were becoming to the trade of the Trent. Nottingham, where Eadward's bridge spanned the river, while his two mounds commanded its banks, was growing into importance not merely as a point of contact between England and the north, but as a centre of internal navigation. The town was still a small one, with but two churches, one on either side the river, and its life was purely industrial, for no abbey towered over its lanes, nor was the rock that overhung it crowned yet with its castle. To keep open the two highways by land and by water that intersected at this point was the main duty of the burghers; they were bound to guard alike "the water of the Trent" and "the foss and road that leads to York." A fine of eight pounds punished any one who ploughed or trenched within two perches of the road, or hindered in any way the passage of boats along the stream.[2] Tolls for the river traffic formed part of the revenues of the town, and the existence of a merchant-gild side

[1] Hist. Abingdon (Stevenson), i. 481, "Nam illorum navigium sæpius transitum illic habebat."

[2] See the description of the town in Domesday Book, and its charter. Stubbs, "Select Charters," 159.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

by side with its cnichten-gild showed its trading activity.

Gloucester.

In the richer and busier valley of the Severn, where fisheries were now of great value, for at least sixty-five are mentioned in charters along its course,[1] Gloucester was fast rising into importance. The foundation of a nunnery there in 681 showed that life had even in the seventh century returned to the ruins of the Roman Glevum, and in the time of Ælfred the town was already of sufficient note for him to establish a mint there. In later days the nunnery gave place to a college of secular priests, and that again under Cnut to a Benedictine abbey. But besides its religious life the position of Gloucester was rapidly giving to the town an increasing political importance. Lying as it did in the border-land between the two races, in a territory where the Welsh blood and the Welsh tongue were still common, Gloucester was destined in the following reign to become one of the state-towns of the realm. As yet however Worcester, as the dwelling-place of ealdorman and bishop, retained its supremacy; and the gift of its market dues, wain-shilling and load-penny, was the costliest among the many boons which Æthelred and Æthelflæd showered on Bishop Werfrith.

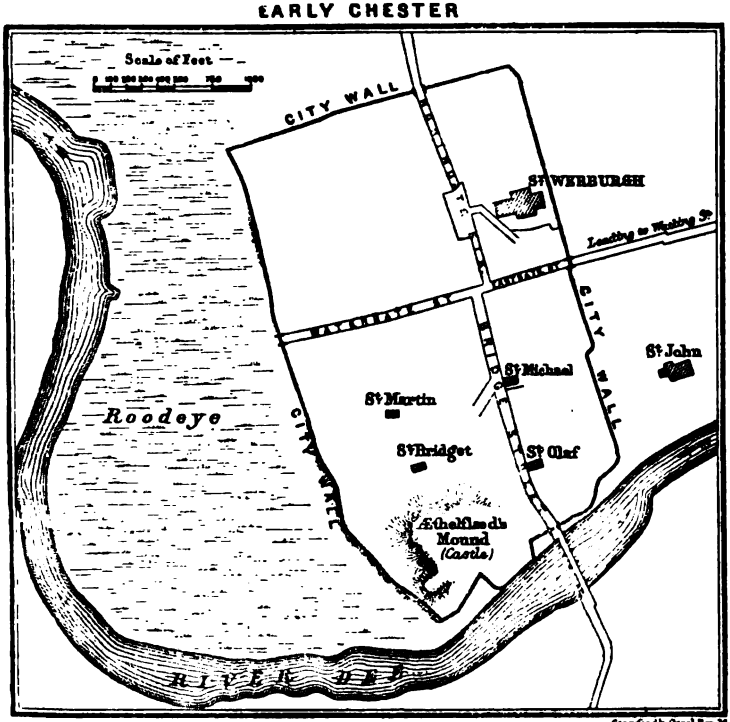
Chester.

Small however as were the beginnings of English trade, it had begun, and a survey of the seaports will show how much it owed to the impulse of the Danes. The port of Chester depended on the trade with Ireland, which had sprung up since the settlement of

[1] There were at least thirty-three on the Wye. The salmon fisheries of these rivers were already leased. Cod. Dip. 695.

the northmen along the Irish coasts, The town—as we know—was one of the most recent in Britain; for its site had lain waste for three hundred years before Æthelflæd in 907 restored and enlarged its Roman walls, raised the mound beside its bridge, and created the new Chester which like its predecessor watched

EARLY CHESTER



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alike the country to the north, and the Welsh passes to the south and westward of the river. It was probably to aid in its repeopling that the secular house of the Mercian saint, Werburgh,[1] was founded in

[1] Indications of the growth of population in towns may be found in the provision of new churches, dedicated to saints in

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

the north-eastern quarter of the city, while its security was provided for by a custom recorded in Domesday, which bound every hide in the shire to furnish a man at its town-reeve's call to repair walls and bridge. The new town probably grew up by degrees over the ruins of the old: St. Werburgh's house stood alone in the north-eastern quarter, and the absence of any older churches in the north-western makes it possible that at first only the southern part of the city, as was likely from its neighbourhood to the bridge, was built over, for here we find on either side of the street leading to the bridge the churches of St. Martin, St. Bridget, and St. Michael; while yet more to the south the church of St. Olaf pointed, like the twelve law-men who presided in its law-court, to a Danish settlement, the result perhaps of a Danish occupation of the city in the later course of the struggle between the Danelaw and the English kings.

Its trade.

Chester lay in a wild and half-barbarous region: the country round it, like most of northern England,[1] was almost destitute of wheat and grain,[2] and formed a vast pasture land, whose inhabitants differed little in their mode of life from their Welsh neighbours

popular favour at the time. The conversion of the English kingdoms gave rise in the seventh century to a number of saints, as for example St. Wilfrid, St. Werburgh, St. Mildred, St. Etheldreda, &c. Saints such as St. Swithin, St. Eadmund, and St. Ebbe in the ninth century marked the early period of the West-Saxon monarchy, as St. Dunstan and St. Ælfheah marked its later period. The northern saints of the eleventh century, St. Olaf and St. Magnus, only just preceded the influx of Norman saints to whom so many later churches were dedicated. (A. S. G.)

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontif." (Migne), 308.

[2] "Farris et maxime tritico inops" (ib.).

across the Dee. Their main food was barley-bread or oat-cake. Only the richer ate meat, the bulk contented themselves with milk and cheese.[1] But in spite of such a neighbourhood the town grew fast; and the legend which makes it the scene of Eadgar's triumph, when he was rowed upon the Dee by vassal kings, and knelt with them about him in the church of St. John without its walls, shows at any rate its importance in Dunstan's day. Its position indeed was as valuable commercially as it was politically; and its market-place offered one of the wildest and most picturesque scenes of the new commercial life. Among the piles of cheeses which then, as now, formed the main produce of the Cheshire plain, the piles of bannock and barley-bread, and the crates of fish which the fish-wives brought from the fisheries of the Dee, its sturdy burghers pushed their way through a motley crowd, in which the trader from the Danish towns of Ireland strove in his northern tongue to draw buyers to his gang of slaves, while the Welsh kerne, wrapped in his blanket, who had driven across the bridge the small and wiry cattle from his native hills, chattered as he might with the hardly less wild Cumbrian from the lands beyond the Ribble.

Bristol.

Whatever part the slave trade played in the commerce of Chester, it was the main traffic of Bristol. The rise of Bristol had been probably as recent as that of its rival port on the western coast; a number of coins,[2] indeed, which witness to the presence of a

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontif." (Migne), 308.

[2] Mr. John Evans writes to me that he has in his collection four coins of Cnut struck at Bristol by the moneyers Ægel-

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

mint here in Cnut's day, form the first historic evidence of the existence of the town itself, though the presence of a parish of St. Mildred within its bounds suggests an earlier life in Mercian days. The trade with southern Ireland, from which its importance sprang, originated at any rate with the planting of Danish towns on the Irish coast, and the rise of Bristol into commercial activity cannot have been earlier than that of Dublin or Waterford. For a trade with Ireland the estuary of the Severn was the natural entrepot, and the deep channel of the Avon furnished a port at that point of the estuary from whence roads led most easily into the heart of Britain. The town however was still a small one in the days of the Confessor,[1] nor was its general traffic probably as yet of much consequence. But nowhere was the slave trade so active. The Bristol burgher bought up men over the whole face of England for export to Ireland, where the Danes, as elsewhere, acted as factors for the slave markets of half Europe. Youths and maidens were above all the object of their search; and in the market of the town rows of both might be seen chained and roped together for the mart. With a yet viler greed,

wine and Ælfwine. Hildebrand describes thirty-two varieties of Cnut's coins struck at Bristol which are now in the Stockholm Museum. In the same collection is one coin of Æthelred the Second minted by ÆLFPERD ON BRIC—, of which Mr. Evans has also a specimen. (A. S. G.)

[1] It was coupled with the manor of Barton in a joint payment of a hundred and ten marks of silver as "feorm" to the royal exchequer, as though it had grown out of this manor at but a recent time (see entry in Domesday). It seems as yet to have been an open borough; its castle was certainly of far later date.

the girls were hired out for purposes of prostitution as well as of sale, and often sold in a state of pregnancy.[1] It was in vain that canon and law forbade that Christian guiltless men should be sold out of the land, and above all to heathen purchasers, or that this prohibition was repeated in the laws of Cnut.[2] It was easy indeed to evade such enactments. The man who had been reduced to slavery by sentence of law, or the children who inherited his taint of blood, could not be held as the guiltless persons mentioned in it; and no English law would be made to apply to slaves either purchased or taken in war from the neighbouring Welsh.

Sea-ports of the south coast.

While the trade with the Irish Ostmen was thus raising Chester and Bristol into importance, the towns of the English Channel continued little more than fishing towns. Exeter perhaps may have carried on some slight traffic with the land of the Franks. The town stood two miles above the mouth of the Exe, but shallow as its channel seems nowadays, the small craft of the town could easily moor beneath its walls, and the part it played in the after war with the Normans shows that it had grown into a strong and wealthy place. But eastward of Exeter we see only a trace of little ports to which the fisheries were beginning to give life. Of those on the Dorsetshire coast Wareham was the most thriving; it was the shire-town, with a house for the king when he came there on his ridings, a dwelling for the shire-reeve, and inns for all the leading thegns of the shire; but like its fellow towns it

[1] Malmesbury, "Vit. Wulstani," Angl. Sacr. 258.
[2] Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 377-379.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

had hardly risen to the dignity of really civic existence, it had never bought its "feorm," and each of its burghers paid his dues either directly or through his lord to the king's reeve. Further westward Hamton and Portsmouth are but names to us, and it is only when we reach the Kentish coast that we find a real commercial life in Sandwich and Dover. Dover had long been the point of passage for Gaul; and on the silting up of the channel between Thanet and Kent, Sandwich had risen from a little hamlet on the sandy flats beside the ruined Richborough, into the main port of the Channel. Its "butsecarls" were present in the fleets that the kings gathered in the channel;[1] its ferry-dues and port-tolls formed a good part of the revenue of Christ-Church at Canterbury, to which Cnut granted them in later days;[2] they were rich enough indeed to tempt the greed of his son,[3] and to draw the two great Kentish

[1] In 1009 Æthelred gathered his fleet there. Tostig took "butsecarls" or sailors from it, doubtless as the best mariners of the coast.

[2] Cod. Dip. 737. Cnut grants to Christ-Church the port and all the "exitus" of its waters, amongst them the right of "wreck" or "strand," so far as a man can throw from a ship fully laden and floating in the river "securis parvula quam Angli vocant Taper-eax super terram," and on the high seas outside the harbour as far as high-water mark, and beyond this the length of a man's stature as he holds a sprouting branch in his hand and stretches it as far out as he can, "tenentis lignum quod Angli nominant spreot et tendentis ante se quantum potest." All found on this "strand," be it clothes or net or arms or iron or gold or silver, went half to the finder and half to the monks.

[3] Cod. Dip. 758. "Harald the king caused Sandwich to be ridden about to his own hand:—and he kept it to himself well nigh two herring-seasons." The rival house, St. Augustine, had

abbeys into a long strife for their possession. But in spite of "the craft that lay at its wharf," its reckoning of time by "herring-seasons" shows that Sandwich was still a fishing town rather than a merchant port.

Trade of the east coast.

Along the eastern coast however the trade with the north which had followed in the wake of the Danish conquest was now arousing commerce into a far more vigorous life. "What do you bring to us?" the merchant is asked in an Old-English dialogue. "I bring skins, silks, costly gems, and gold," he answers, "besides various garments, pigment, wine, oil, and ivory, with brass, and copper, and tin, silver and glass, and such like."[1] The main trade with the Wash or the Humber was probably of rougher wares than these, the skins and ropes and ship masts which, at a later day, formed the staple of the Baltic trade in the hands of the Hanse towns, and above all the iron and steel that the Scandinavian lands so long supplied to Britain. The herring fishery in the German Sea had long been a

a great longing for Sandwich, and strove to buy it of Harald or to make a compromise with the monks of Christ-Church. But it was in vain that Abbot Ælfstan of St. Augustine lowered his demands even "to a third penny of the tolls, and he to give the convent (of Christ-Church) ten pounds: they refused it altogether and said it was no use asking. . . . And when he could not get on in this war, he asked leave to make a wharf over against Meldthryth's acre opposite the ferry, but all the convent decidedly opposed this. . . . The Abbot Ælfstan set to with a great help, and let dig a great canal at Hypelles fleot, hoping that craft would lie there just as they did at Sandwich; however he got no good by it."

[1] Quoted from MS. Tib. A. 3, in Sharon Turner, "Hist. Ang. Sax." iii. 100.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

lucrative branch of employment among the northern peoples; and as this was already absorbing the boats of Dover and Sandwich, we cannot doubt that it formed as large a part of the business of the eastern ports. With the growing rigidity of the ecclesiastical rules for fasting and abstinence the supply of fish as an article of diet became every day a more important matter. The inland-fisher supplied eels, haddocks, minnows, and eel-pouts, skate and lampreys, from rivers and fish-ponds; the sea-fisher brought herrings and salmon, porpoises, sturgeons, oysters and crabs, mussels, winkles, cockles, flounders, plaice, and lobsters, as the harvest of the sea.[1] With the whale fishery of the northern ocean, which was to bring wealth in later days to the Humber, the English seaman, if we may trust a representation of the time, was too timid to meddle. "Can you take a whale?" asks his questioner. "Many," he answers, "take whales without danger, and then they get a great price, but I dare not from the fearfulness of my mind."[2]

Its sea-ports.

But Dane and Norwegian were traders over a yet wider field than the northern seas;[3] their barks

[1] Ælfric's Dialogues in the Cotton Library MS. Tib. A. 3; quoted in Sharon Turner, "Hist. Ang. Sax." iii. 20.

[2] Ibid. p. 22.

[3] As early as Harald Fair-hair's time, his son Biorn "ruled over Westfold, and generally lived at Tunsberg, and went but little on war expeditions. Tunsberg at that time was much frequented by merchant vessels, both from the Wik and the north country, and also from the south, from Denmark and from Saxon-land. King Biorn had also merchant ships on voyages to other lands, by which he procured himself costly goods and such things as he thought needful, and so his brothers called him "the

entered the Mediterranean, while the overland route through Russia brought the silks and gold-work of Constantinople and the East to their Eastland traders; and the tempting list of wares which the merchant describes in Ælfric's dialogue may have fairly represented what the northmen brought to their markets at Grimsby or York. The growth of this northern trade at any rate is shown by the growth of the ports along the eastern coast. Ipswich was becoming a considerable town with some five hundred houses and between two and three thousand inhabitants; Dunwich too, though even then threatened by the sea, was growing fast. But neither could vie in size or wealth with Norwich. Its site at the confluence of the Wensum with the Yare, at the highest point to which the tidal water then penetrated, could not fail to call to the town population and traffic; and the wealth and daring of its six or seven thousand inhabitants soon became proverbial. Many of these were probably Danes; and the town gave an odd proof of its connexion with the Scandinavian lands by paying, as Domesday tells us, among its yearly dues to the king, "a bear, and six dogs for the bear-baiting." The merchants of Lincoln were also closely linked with the north; a Norwegian king indeed, on the eve of an expedition, could leave his treasure in the hands of one of them. No bishop's minster or earl's castle as yet crowned the hill-top of Lincoln; but the increase of trade was already drawing its long steep street down the slope, at whose foot the Witham

Freightman" and "the Merchant." Harald Fair-hair's Saga, Laing, "Sea Kings," i. 305.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

breaks through the upland to the flats of the Wash. In those flats Boston was growing up round the abbey of St. Botulf, to depose Lincoln as Hull deposed York, when the increasing size of vessels made the Witham and Ouse impassable for traffic. But as yet the tiny commerce needed only vessels that drew little water; and Lincoln, with its merchant gild and its twelve lawmen ruling the city sokes, was a mart of both inland and outland trade.[1]

York.

The centre however of the northern trade was York. In the days of Dunstan[2] much of its Roman glory still lingered on in noble buildings and massive walls, even then crumbling with age; but its later fortunes under Engle and Dane were marked by the mound which rose on the tongue of land at the junction of Foss and Ouse, a mound which had probably been raised in the early Northumbrian days to command the port, and on which the northern conquerors of York had planted a fortress, whose demolition by Æthelstan announced the subjection of the Danelaw,[3] and whose site is now marked by the ruined fortress of yet later days called Clifford's Tower. The city was proud of its population and wealth. It boasted of thirty thousand dwellers; it really contained some two thousand houses and about ten thousand inhabitants, a number far beyond that of any other English town save London.[4] The city indeed now not only

[1] "Emporium hominum terra marique venientium." Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontificum" (Hamilton), p. 312.

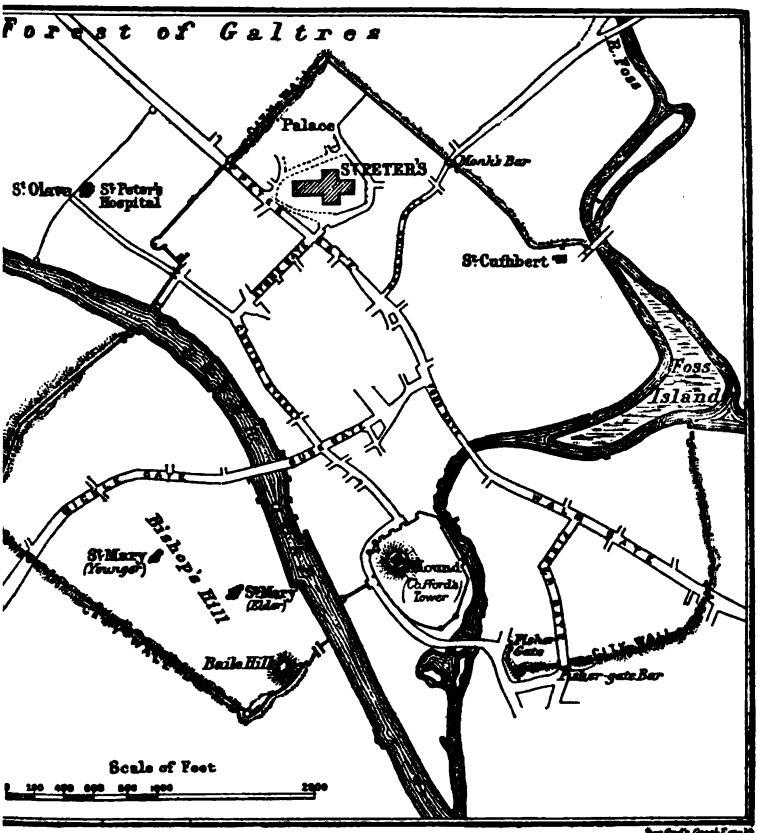
[2] Life of Oswald (Raine), "Hist. of Church, of York," p. 454, etc.

[3] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 213.

[4] "Gaudet de multitudine populorum, non minus virorum ac

filled the wedge-like space between the Foss and the Ouse, but stretched to south-east and south-west over

EARLY YORK



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both rivers in considerable suburbs. Across the Ouse houses gathered thickly round the two churches of

mulierum, exceptis parvulis et pubetinis, quam xxx. milia in eadem civitate numerati sunt." Life of Oswald, p. 454. Strictly construed, this would mean some fifty or sixty thousand dwellers;

CHAP. IX. — The Reign of Cnut. — 1016-1035.

St. Mary, Bishops-hill, in the fabric of one of which we find fragments of the Roman work with which this part of York abounds, while across the Foss the fishers gathered in their own Fisher-gate. A third suburb along the Ouse is marked as a Danish quarter by the later church of St. Olaf and by Siward's choice of a burial-place there; and here no doubt mainly centred the trade and wealth of the town.[1]

London.

From the first upgrowth of commerce, however, the centre of the whole trading life of England was London. Its early history is lost in obscurity. We know nothing of the circumstances of its conquest, of the fate of its citizens, or of the settlement of the conquerors within its walls. That some such settlement had taken place at least as early as the close of the seventh century is plain from the story of Mellitus, when placed as bishop within its walls; but it is equally plain that the settlement was an English one, that the provincials had here as elsewhere disappeared, and that the ruin of the city had been complete. Had London merely surrendered to the East-Saxons and retained its older population and municipal life, it is hard to imagine how, within less than half a century, its burghers could have so wholly lost all trace of Christianity that not even a ruined church, as at Canterbury, remained for the

but either number is absurd. Domesday gives 1418 houses for five of its "shires" and one "shire" waste, with 189 for the archbishop's "shire."

[1] "Inedicibiliter repleta est, et mercatorum gazis locupleta qui undique adveniunt, maxime ex Danorum gente." Life of Oswald, (Raine), "Hist. Ch. of York," i. 454.

use of the Christian bishop, and that the first care of Mellitus was to set up a mission-church in the midst of a heathen population. It is even harder to imagine how all trace of the municipal institutions to which the Roman towns clung so obstinately should have so utterly disappeared. But more direct proofs of the wreck of the town meet us in the stray glimpses which we are able to get of its earlier topographical history. The story of early London is not that of a settled community slowly putting off the forms of Roman for those of English life, but of a number of little groups scattered here and there over the area within the walls, each growing up with its own life and institutions, gilds, sokes, religious houses, and the like, and only slowly drawing together into a municipal union which remained weak and imperfect even at the Norman conquest.

Early Saxon settlement.

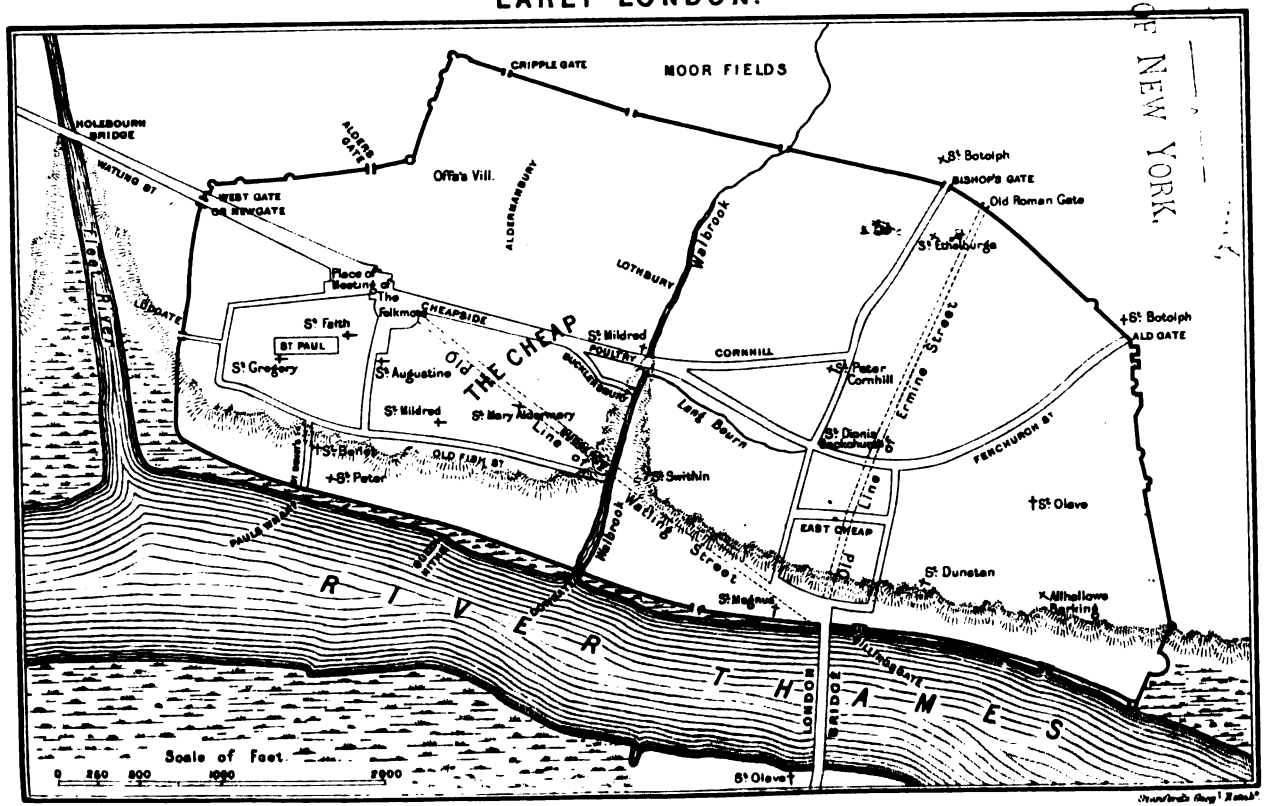
Unluckily it is only here and there that we can even dimly trace the growth of these little communities. The first which we can clearly follow is that of the church and monastery of St. Paul. The ground which Æthelberht gave Bishop Mellitus for his minster and its accompanying buildings, ground which formed the highest point in the city, and whose area corresponds with that of the present precinct of the cathedral-church, was no doubt a spot waste and uninhabited, and thus formed part of the folk-land which was at the king's disposal.[1] But from

[1] The bounds of the grant were probably much the same as those of the present precincts, with Old Change to the eastward, Pater-noster Row to the north, Ave-Maria Lane and Creed Lane to the west, and Carter Lane to the south.

other indications we may gather that not this spot only, but the whole area about it, was waste and uninhabited. To the north of St. Paul's, for instance, the ground on which St. Martin's-le-Grand was planted seems from the rise of this great church there to have been mainly open ground at the eve of the Norman conquest, while to the westward it was still easy for the Franciscans to find room for their settlement as late as the thirteenth century. The space south of the precincts was chiefly occupied in later days by the soke of Castle Baynard, a fortress with which the Norman kings bridled the city on the westward, as they bridled it to the east with the Tower,[1] and which was probably built, like the Tower itself, on open ground which may have been only recently won from the foreshore of the river. The waste state of the ground has left its mark even on the little lane now known as St. Benet's, which stretches along the borders of this soke from Paul's Chain to Paul's Wharf. As one of the first needs for the fringe of population which would naturally grow up around the precincts was that of access to the river, this lane can hardly have been later in growth than the close of the eighth century, and formed a part of the bishop's liberty; but as neither this liberty, nor the parish of St. Benet's, which ecclesiastically represented it, extended much beyond the lane itself, we may conjecture that it ran through a district which was at this time unoccupied.

[1] The soke of Castle Baynard comprised the whole district round the precincts of St. Paul's from Benet's Lane to the Wall, and northward as far as Ludgate.

EARLY LONDON.



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Growth of population.

The settlement about St. Paul's however was far from being as early as the age of Mellitus, for the work of that missionary was interrupted by the apostasy of the East-Saxons, and it is not till half a century later, when London had passed under the Mercian rule [1] that we again find bishops settled there. The most famous of these is Erkenwald,[2] and it is to him and his immediate successors that we must attribute the little ring of churches and parishes—such as St. Augustine, St. Gregory, St. Benet, and St. Faith [3]—which show a growth of population round the precincts of the minster. The legend of Erkenwald for the first time brings us face to face with the new burghers, in their struggle with the monks of Chertsey and the nuns of Barking, at whose house he had died, for the possession of the sainted bishop's remains. They broke into the death-chamber, runs the legend, seized the corpse, and set it in a waggon drawn by oxen to carry it to the city. Their torches, however, were blown out by a mighty storm, they could not ford the swollen waters of the Lea, nor find boats to cross it, and a fresh strife rose over the remains, which only ended in both parties praying for

[1] Wulfhere of Mercia sold its bishoprick to Wini in 666. Bæda, H. E. lib. iii. c. 7.

[2] Bæda, H. E. lib. iv. c. vi. He became bishop in 675 or 676, and died about 693. Stubbs, art. on "Erkenwald" in "Dict. Christ. Biogr." ii. 178.

[3] The dedications to St. Augustine and St. Gregory bear evidence of close association with the conversion of England. St. Benet's or St. Benedict's recalls the fact that it was during Erkenwald's episcopate that the Benedictine rule first began to make its way in England. St. Faith was a favourite early dedication. (A. S. G.)

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

a miracle to decide between them. At their prayers the waters parted and suffered the waggon to pass through, the torches re-lighted themselves, the storm ceased, and the burghers brought the body of their saint in triumph into London.[1] About the same time, in the reign of Wulfhere's successor, Æthelred, we catch the first indication of a revival of the trade and foreign commerce of the town in its mention as a mart for slaves, and the presence there of merchants from Frisia:[2] while towards the close of the seventh century its "wic reeve" is mentioned in the laws of the Kentish kings.[3]

The Cheap.

If we look for the site of the early community to which reeve and market and burgesses belonged, tradition takes us to the district afterwards known as the Ward of Cheap as the oldest part of London. Nor is the tradition at variance with the indications of the ground itself. Nowhere was life so likely to awake again as along the banks of the Walbrook, then and for centuries to come a broad river-channel, between whose muddy banks the stream was still deep enough to float the small boats used in the traffic up from the Thames to the very edge of the "Cheap," or market-place at the hythe or port which tradition fixed in the modern Bucklersbury.[4] But that the

[1] We may perhaps find a trace of Erkenwald in the church of All Hallows, Barking, in the neighbourhood of the Tower. Erkenwald was the founder of the monastery at Barking, and the church and parish may mark the locality of a soke or manor which he had granted to it. [2] Bæda, H. E. lib. 4, c. 22.

[3] "Laws of Hlothere and Eadric." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 35.

[4] Stow's "London" (ed. Thoms), p. 97. Cheapward runs along the Walbrook from Bucklersbury to the Poultry.

space between this border of the Cheap and the minster precincts was already fairly peopled by the close of the eighth century we may gather from the site of two of the churches within this area. From the days of Wulfhere to those of Ecgberht, London, save for its temporary subjection to the West-Saxon rule by Ine, remained under the rule of the Mercian kings, one of the greatest of whom, Offa, is traditionally said to have occupied a king's vill in what must have then been open ground to the north of the little borough we have been describing, at a spot now marked by St. Alban's church in Wood Street.[1] Mildred was a popular Mercian saint of the time: and if the two churches dedicated to her in Bread Street and in the Poultry be, as is likely, of this date, they would show that the space between the Cheap and the minster, from Fish Street on the south to our Cheapside on the

[1] In Abbot Paul's time, 1077-1093, the Abbey of St. Alban's acquired "plures ecclesias in Lundoniis, quarum unius donationem, scilicet Sancti Albani, pro patronatu alterius, nescitur qua consideratione Abbati Westmonasteriensi concessit. Fuit autem capella regis Offa, fundatoris, cui fuit continuum suum regale palatium. Sed incuriâ sequacium et desidiâ omnis locus ille, improbâ occupatione civium vicinorium, in parvum mansum, libertatem tamen antiquam retinentem, coartatur."—Hist. Mon. S. Albani (ed. Riley), vol. i. p. 55. That is, an old chapel, perhaps of Offa's king's-tun, was given to St. Alban's after the Conquest, and *then* made a church under the abbey-saint's name. Stow and the ordinary London historians blunder wildly about this. A grant of the last Mercian king, Burhred, of a "gaziferi agelluli in vico Lundoniæ, hoc est ubi nominatur Ceolmundingchaga, qui est non longe from (sic) Westgetum positus," (Thorpe, "Diplomatarium," p. 118), points to some dwellings about "Westgate," the "Newgate" of later days.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

East-Cheap.

north, had grown into a single borough before the days of Ecgberht.[1]

The story of the eastern half of London is, in its earliest part, even more obscure than the story of the western half. The great central road from Newgate, which crossed Walbrook at the Poultry, stretches thence through its area to London Bridge; and a Cheap grew up, probably at a very early time, on the southern side of this road, the East-Cheap of later days, though far smaller and less important than the Cheap in the west. But this Cheap must at first have stood almost isolated;[2] it was only slowly that population spread over the space about it, and dwellings rose scantily and sporadically along the line of commu-

[1] That this early London grew up on ground from which the Roman city had practically disappeared may be inferred from the change in the main line of communication which passed through the heart of each. This was the road which led from Newgate to the Bridge. In Roman London this seems to have struck through the city in a direct line from Newgate to a bridge in the neighbourhood of the present Budge Row. Of this road the two extremities survived in English London, one from the gate to the precincts of St. Paul, the other in the present Budge Row. But between these points all trace of it is lost. The lines of the street that ran through the area which it must have traversed are not only not in accordance with it, but thrown diagonally across it. It is the same wherever we dig over the site of the ancient city; the remains of Roman London which we discover have little or no relation to the lines of the modern times.

[2] We see it however extending as early as the close of the eighth century, when Offa (Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 34, note) confirms a gift of two brothers to the church of S. Denys of a plot of ground "in portu qui nuncupatur Lunden-wick," in which we may probably see the origin of S. Dionis Backchurch at the south end of Lime Street just to north of the East-Cheap.

nication which led from the bridge over Walbrook to the various gates, and through these to the country beyond. It is thus as a place of traffic that London reappears in history. Its position indeed was such that traffic could not fail to re-create the town, for whether a bridge or a ferry existed at this time,[1] it was here that the traveller from Kent or Gaul would still cross the Thames, and it was from London that the roads still diverged which, silent and desolate as they had become, furnished the means of communication to any part of Britain.[2] The same advantages of site, in a word, which had so rapidly drawn trade and population to the Roman Londinium would, though in a less degree, draw trade and population to the English London.[3]

Beginnings of municipal life.

Though its growth was for a while arrested by the early struggle with the northmen, a new life began for the city with its conquest by Ælfred. The most important part of his work was his restoration of its walls. Like the rest of the Roman town the walls themselves had fallen into such decay that they hardly formed any obstacle to an assailant; and it is

[1] The first historical proof of the existence of a bridge is in Eadgar's day, when a witch was drowned there. "Þa nam man ðæt wif, and ádrencte hí æt Lundenbricge." Cod. Dip. 591.

[2] See "Making of England," pp. 103, 104. (A. S. G.)

[3] The influence of the bishops on its early developement should be noticed. Bishop Theodred in his will (Thorpe, "Diplomatarium," p. 512) calls himself "bishop of the Lunden-ware," and this close association of bishop, minster, and town is seen in the gathering of the folk-moot at the eastern end of S. Paul's, summoned by its bell, as well as in the muster of the citizens in arms at the western.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

thus that we hear of no opposition to its repeated occupation by the Danes. Their condition indeed is illustrated by the fact that the very position of the gates must have become in some cases uncertain; for the Bishopsgate which dates from this time is considerably to the east of the Roman gate which it represented. The security however which was given by these walls, the new impulse derived from their re-building, and above all the peace and prosperity won by the great sovereigns who followed Ælfred, are seen in the rapid extension of London through the following century. The "eight moneyers" whom we find allotted to London by Æthelstan's laws show the position it already held for wealth and importance. Under Æthelstan too we find the first document which throws light upon its municipal and commercial life.[1] It is the record of a gild of a hundred burghers who with the sanction of the king and bishop organize themselves in groups of three, each with its head-man, the whole body being united under an ealdorman, with definite provisions for common meeting and common contributions, with a view to the enforcement of a rough police and self-government. The agreement constituting this frith-gild is drawn up by the bishops and reeves belonging to London, and confirmed by the pledges of the frith-gegildas. If this, as it seems, is the act of a voluntary association, we have in it the first indication of the way in which the new London was

[1] The "Judicia Civitatis Lundoniæ." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. p. 229 *et seq.*

to be formed.[1] Frith-gilds such as this, church-sokes and lay-sokes, were growing up side by side at various points of the area within the walls, each with its separate life and jurisdiction,[2] but all bound together by a common relation to the king's reeve, port-reeve, or wick-reeve, as well as by those beginnings of a true municipal life which are to be seen in the existence of a common Port-mannimot, or moot of the burghers from all parts of the city. That this municipal life was furthered by and closely connected with the bishops of the town was shown by the fact that this moot was called together by the bell from the bell-tower of St. Paul's, and that it met in the space within the precinct to the eastward of the church. Nor is it less remarkable that when the burghers gathered for purposes of war they mustered on the open space at the west end of the church, and marched under the banner of St. Paul.[3]

Growth of London.

It is only by conjecture that we can associate the gild with its ealdorman at its head, whose memory is preserved in the Dooms of Æthelstan, with the Cnichten-gild of Eadgar's day, out of which the later "merchant-gild" may have grown, or with the

[1] "London, when it springs into historical light, is a collection of communities based on the lordship, the parish, and the gild; and there is no reason to doubt that similar coincident causes helped the growth of such towns as York and Exeter." Stubbs, "Const. Hist." i. 107.

[2] The twelve "lawmen, habentes sacam et socam," at Lincoln, Stamford, and Cambridge, show a like organization in other English towns. So at York, "in Eboraco civitate," says Domesday, "tempore regis Edwardi præter scyram Archiepiscopi fuerunt sex scyræ."

[3] Stow's "London" (ed. Thoms), p. 12.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

"lithsmen" who play so important a part in Cnut's day, and who seem to have conducted the inland traffic with Oxford and the towns along the Thames. Still more conjectural perhaps is the connexion of this gild with the borough which grew up to the north of the earlier Lundon-burh, and which has left a trace of itself in the name of Aldermanbury, a name now lost in that of Cripple-gate ward. However this may be, it is probable that it is to this period that we must refer the beginnings of this Ealdorman-bury, as well as of the Loth-bury which lay on the banks of the Walbrook to the eastward, though the two boroughs were still parted from one another by a space which is now represented by Basing-hall ward, and were far from extending northward to the wall.[1] But to the eastward of the Walbrook London must have been increasing even more rapidly. While western London was growing into the borough between the Poultry and St. Paul's, eastern London seems still to have remained bare of dwellings save for the little group at its East-Cheap, and the houses which fringed the lanes that led from the Poultry to the Bishopsgate and the Bridge. The most important of these was probably that which led up Cornhill and along our Bishopsgate Street to the great manors of the bishops on the north of the city. As Cornhill was a bishop's soke, it is likely that the string of dwellings which came to creep up its ascent, with their church of St. Peter in the midst of them, were due originally to the needs of this communication with

[1] The one monument on the west side of Walbrook which we can certainly assign to this period is the church of St. Swithun.

the episcopal manors, while the bounds of the soke, as shown in those of the modern wards, prove it to have been originally a mere lane of houses, straggling, as we may suppose, through an otherwise untenanted area. Bishopsgate ward, which consists simply of that street with the houses on both sides of the road, still more clearly looks back to a time when the lane to the Gate was a mere double line of houses running through an area as yet unoccupied.

Growth of foreign trade.

But with the age of Eadgar came a time of rapid developement which told yet more on eastern than on western London; for the trade which we find established in the regulations of Æthelred[1] must have grown up under his father's reign. The commerce with the north, which had come with the Danes, was backed by a trade with the Rhineland as well as by one with Normandy. "The men of Rouen," runs the Institute, "who came with wine and sturgeon, gave as dues six shillings for every big ship and the twentieth piece of every sturgeon. The men of Flanders, and Ponthieu, and Normandy, and France, showed their goods for sale and paid toll. So did the men of Hogge, and Liége, and Neville; and the Emperor's men, who came in their ships, were held worthy of good laws even as we." The sea-faring vessels in which this trade was conducted, no longer able from their size to reach the hythe in the Walbrook, moored along the Thames itself at Billingsgate and Queenhythe, on whose rude wharves the laws show us piled a strange medley of goods: pepper and spices from the far East, crates of gloves and gray

[1] "De Institutis Lundoniæ." Thorpe, "Anc. Laws," i. 300.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

cloths, it may be from the Lombard looms, sacks of wool, the lowly forerunners of England's own great export in later days, iron-work from Liége, butts of French wine and of vinegar, and with them the rural products of the country itself—cheese, butter, lard, and eggs, with live swine and fowls. The influence of the port at Billingsgate was seen in the rapid peopling of eastern London. Houses must have been already clustering round the gates; and it is probable that the district just within the Ald-gate,[1] which was a soke in the twelfth century,[2] was already to some extent peopled by Eadgar's day. If the tradition of the Cnichten-gild, at any rate, is to be trusted, and if the district without the gate[3] then "desolate" from the Danish ravages was given to the gild as a soke by Eadgar,[4] this would date the beginning of buildings in this quarter and that of the church of St. Botulf, round which they clustered as "the head of the soke," in his reign. Just to the south of this district, and occupying the whole space between the East-Cheap and the Tower, is another large area now represented by Tower Ward. The church of All Hallows, Barking, near the south-eastern angle of this ward, may, as we have said, represent some slight gathering of people there on land belonging to that house at an earlier date, but the bulk of the area is divided between the parishes of St. Dunstan in the East and St. Olave's, Har

[1] Now represented by its ward.
[2] When it was held by Queen Matilda.
[3] Our Portsoken ward.
[4] Stow's "London" (ed. Thoms), p. 46.

Street, and can therefore hardly have been peopled at an earlier time than the reign of Eadgar and Æthelred. If much of this sudden growth of London was due to the new trading energy, much was due to an actual settlement of Danes. Malmesbury indeed speaks of London as having become half-barbarized at this time by the abundance of its Danish inhabitants;[1] their influence is shown by the conversion of its Portmannimot into a "Husting"; while the churches of St. Magnus and St. Olave at either end of the Bridge suggest that the steep slope down to the river along which Thames Street runs on either side Walbrook, as well as the similar slope across the water, were both peopled by northmen at about this period. It is possible indeed that the district that lies between the present Thames Street and the river was only reclaimed in the days of Cnut; none of the dedications of the parishes in this region point to an earlier date.

Importance of London.

The wealth which had been brought to London by this rapid developement of trade may be estimated by the tribute demanded from it even in the first year of Cnut's reign; while the whole of England had to pay a Danegeld of seventy-two thousand pounds, the townsmen of London were taxed at ten thousand five hundred pounds. And with the upgrowth of commercial activity and wealth there had come, as we have seen, a new political importance which from the time of the later Danish wars London was never again to lose. Under Cnut it became not only the commercial but the military centre of the

[1] Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 318.

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut. 1016-1035.

kingdom, and soon rose to be its political centre as well. When the King of the West-Saxons became finally in fact as well as in name King of all England, Winchester could no longer serve as the seat of the royal power, the capital of the larger state; and the new necessities of the time led to the rapid rise in political importance of London, whose position, commanding the highway of the Thames and the great lines of communication which struck from the chief port of the realm across the island, made it the natural centre of the English provinces, while it was no less fitted by position to become the centre of the great empire which Cnut was building up on either shore of the North Sea.

Cnut's pilgrimage.

The firm hold which Cnut had gained on England during the eight years which followed his coronation now left him free to turn to the affairs of his northern realm. He was already master of Denmark, but Norway had risen in revolt the year after his conquest of England, 1017, and had driven out his nephew, Jarl Hakon, who held it in the Danish name. For a time Cnut took no measures of revenge, but remained firm to his policy of the consolidation of his power in England and Denmark. In 1025, however, the peace and security of his empire left him free to turn his thoughts to the assertion of his supremacy, and to make a formal demand for the submission of Norway. The mocking answer of its native ruler, the famous St. Olaf, was not followed at once by open war, but led to a train of negotiations in which the prudence and skill of Cnut showed themselves. While attempting to break the alliance

between Sweden and Norway, and to spread disaffection and distrust among the Norwegians, he sought to strengthen his hold in Denmark itself by leaving as its ruler his son Harthacnut, a child of seven years old, in the charge of his brother-in-law, Ulf. His next step showed the large political conceptions which ruled his action. The Scandinavian kingdoms had up to this time lain outside the European commonwealth, the terror and scourge of Western Christendom. Heathenism still held its ground in the forests of the North, and the peoples of Europe saw in the pirates the deadly enemies alike of their civilization and of their religion. Cnut's first aim was by a decisive act on his own part to bring his northern kingdom into a new union with Christendom. He undertook a pilgrimage to Rome. As a West-Saxon king he was indeed but following in the steps of his predecessors for more than three hundred years past, but no Danish king or jarl had ever yet left the shores of Denmark as a pilgrim; and there was no longer any doubt as to the character which the young king meant to impress on the government of his northern realm when at twenty-six he set sail for Rome. From the moment of his landing on the coast of Flanders the political character of his journey was clearly marked, whether he turned aside to secure the friendship of Count Albert at Namur, or astonished Bishop Fulbert of Chartres by the wisdom and splendour of a king who had till now been in the eyes of Europe but a leader of heathen pirates. As he journeyed along the pilgrims' route, he secured by treaties with the masters of the Alpine passes safety

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

for English merchants and travellers to the Papal City, and in Rome itself won from the Pope immunity from all tolls and taxes for the Saxon school which had grown up there.

His Northern Empire.

His political work was completed in the spring by his meeting at Rome with the Emperor Conrad, when the master of the two kingdoms of Denmark and England was strong enough to wring from the Emperor the restoration of the land beyond the Eider which had been seized by Otto the Second, and to throw back the German frontier to that river; while a treaty was arranged for the future marriage of Cnut's daughter to the son of Conrad, afterwards the Emperor Henry III. But from his triumphant pilgrimage Cnut returned to fresh troubles at home. England indeed remained peaceful; but Denmark had revolted in favour of the child Harthacnut and the regent Ulf, and torn by civil strife was in no state to resist the combined attack with which it was threatened by Norway and Sweden. Cnut, however, backed by the steady loyalty of his English realm, and strengthened by the new naval power which it had developed in these years of prosperity, was able to make himself quickly master of Denmark and to repulse the invasion of the allied fleets; and in the following year, 1028, he sailed from England to Norway with fifty great ships, and drove King Olaf out of the land, over which he set his nephew, Hakon, as jarl. A last rising of the Norwegians against his power, in 1029, was at once stamped out, and till his death Norway owned his rule.

Lord of three realms, Cnut could now turn to the

The Scottish kingdom.

last troubles that seemed to threaten him, and act as decisively on the borders of his English realm as in the northern seas. His power was shown by the ease with which he crushed difficulties that had hardly tried the resources of the earlier English kings. A rising of the Welsh had been checked in the first years of his rule by the march of an army on St. David's, and among the last events of his reign we hear of the slaying of a Welsh prince by the English. These later years were marked too by his action in putting an end to the dangers which sprang from the new attitude of the Scottish kings. We have already seen how the political relations of the Scots with their southern neighbours had been affected by the action of the Danes. Pressed between the Norse jarls settled in Caithness and the Danelaw of central England, the Scot kings were glad to welcome the friendship of Wessex; but with the conquest by the house of Ælfred of the Danelaw, and the extension of the new English realm to their own southern border, their dread of English ambition became in its turn greater than their dread of the Dane. In the battle of Brunanburh, the Scot king Constantine fought side by side with the northmen against Æthelstan. Eadmund's gift of southern Cumbria showed the price which the English kings set upon Scottish friendship. The district was thenceforth held by the heir of the Scottish crown, and for a time at least, the policy of conciliation seems to have been successful, for the Scots proved Eadred's allies in his wars with Northumbria. But even as allies, they were still pressing southwards on the

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

English realm. Across the Forth lay the English Lowlands, that northern Bernicia which had escaped the Danish settlement that changed the neighbouring Deira into a part of the Danelaw. It emerged from the Danish storm as English as before, with a line of native ealdormen who seem to have inherited the blood of its older kings. Harassed as the land had been, and changed as it was from the Northumbria of Bæda or Cuthbert, Bernicia was still a tempting bait to the clansmen of the Scottish realm.

Its winning of Northern Bernicia.

One important post was already established on Northumbrian soil. Whether by peaceful cession on Eadred's part or no, the border fortress of Edinburgh passed during his reign into Scottish hands. It is uncertain if the grant of Lothian by Eadgar followed the acquisition of Edinburgh; but at the close of his reign the southward pressure of the Scots was strongly felt. "Raids upon Saxony" are marked by the Pictish chronicle among the deeds of King Kenneth; and amidst the troubles of Æthelred's reign a Scottish host swept the country to the very gates of Durham. But Durham was rescued by the sword of Uhtred, and the heads of the slain marauders were hung by their long twisted hair round its walls. The raid and the fight were memorable as the opening of a series of descents which were from this time to form much of the history of the north. Cnut was hardly seated on the throne when in 1018 the Scot king, Malcolm, made a fresh inroad on Northumbria, and the flower of its nobles fell fighting round Earl Eadwulf in a battle at Carham on the Tweed. For a time the blow passed unavenged; and it was not till

1031 that Cnut was forced by fresh outbreaks to march upon the Scots. The might of the great conqueror must have been overwhelming, for Malcolm submitted without a battle; but his pledge to become Cnut's "man" seems to have been part of a political arrangement by which the possession of his conquests was confirmed to the Scottish king, and by which the northern half of the old Northumbrian kingdom became henceforth part of the Scottish realm.

Its results.

Few gains have told more powerfully on the political character of a kingdom than this. King of western Dalriada, king of the Picts, lord of Cumbria, the Scot king had till now been ruler only of Gaelic and Cymric peoples. "Saxony," the land of the English across the Forth, had been simply a hostile frontier, the land of an alien race, whose rule had been felt in the assertion of Northumbrian supremacy and West-Saxon overlordship. Now for the first time Malcolm saw Englishmen among his subjects. Lothian, with its Northumbrian farmers and seamen, became a part of his dominions. And from the first moment of its submission it was a most important part. The wealth, the civilization, the settled institutions, the order of the English territory won by the Scottish king, placed it at the head of the Scottish realm. The clans of Cantyre or of the Highlands, the Cymry of Strathclyde, fell into the background before the stout farmers of northern Northumbria. The spell drew the Scot king in course of time from the very land of the Gael. Edinburgh, an English town in the English territory, became ultimately his accustomed seat. In the midst of an English

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

district the Scot kings gradually ceased to be the Gaelic chieftains of a Gaelic people. The process at once began which was to make them Saxons, Englishmen in tongue, in feeling, in tendency, in all but blood. Nor was this all. The gain of Lothian brought them into closer political relations with the English crown. The loose connexion which the king of Scots and Picts had acknowledged in owning Eadward the Elder as father and lord, had no doubt been drawn tighter by the fealty now owed for the fief of Cumbria. But Lothian was English ground, and the grant of Lothian made the Scot king "man" of the English king for that territory, as Earl Eadwulf was Cnut's "man" for the land to the south of it. Social influences, political relations, were henceforth to draw the two realms together; but it is in the cession of Lothian that the process really began.

The Æthelings in Normandy.

At the moment this settlement of the north was chiefly important as freeing Cnut's hands to deal with dangers which were now gathering in the south. The policy by which Æthelred had detached Normandy from its old association with the Danes was at last bearing fruit. Of the line of Cerdic none remained to dispute Cnut's throne save the two sons of Eadmund Ironside, who had found a distant refuge in Hungary, and their uncles, the sons of Æthelred by his second marriage with Emma, the Æthelings Ælfred and Eadward. From the time of their father's flight from England, these had remained at the Norman court, and though in wedding Emma anew to Cnut, Richard the Good virtually pledged himself to give no Norman aid to his nephews' claims, their presence at Rouen

was still a check on the English king. Children as they were of Emma, and bred up from childhood at the ducal court, the two Æthelings seemed to every Norman members of the ducal house and Normans like themselves; and from after events we see how readily the Norman knighthood would have followed them in any effort to gain the English crown. Every day made the chance of such an attack a more formidable danger; for not only was Normandy growing fast in population and military power, but the energy of its people was already in secret revolt against the peaceful system of their dukes. The duchy was seething with hot-blooded soldiers, longing for enterprize, as well as envious of the Danes who put into their harbours with booty won on English ground; and an occasional march to aid the Parisian king, or to avenge a wrong offered by the Burgundian duke, or to drive off neighbour princes from the border, was all that Richard's peaceful reign offered in the way of outer warfare, while his stern hand crushed roughly out all chance of disorder at home. Little by little therefore the old northern spirit of wandering and venturing found outlets elsewhere. Roger de Toesny led a troop of warriors to Spain; and some Norman pilgrims in Apulia grew fast into a war-band which was to change the destinies of southern Italy.

Robert the Devil.

England offered a nearer field for adventure than Italy or Spain; and, wedded as he was to a Norman wife, Cnut must have watched jealously the temper of the Norman people through the reigns of Richard the Good and of his son and successor Richard the

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1028.

Third. The danger which he dreaded at last actually fronted him on the accession of Robert—Robert the Devil as men called him in after time—who became duke of Normandy on his brother's death in 1028. The land was now ringing with the marvellous victories over Greek or Moslem which Normans were winning in far-off fields; poor knights and younger sons, sick of peace and good order, were streaming off, in band after band, over Alps and Pyrenees; and the restless temper of his people stirred the blood in the veins of their duke. From the first Robert showed his warlike activity, crushing revolt within his duchy, bringing Brittany back into submission, restoring Count Baldwin to power in Flanders, and seating King Henry in the face of all opposition on the French throne. But France offered no such scope for greed and ambition as the land over the Channel. England was nearer than Spain or Apulia, and the title of the sons of Æthelred gave a fair pretext for attack. We are left to Norman writers for the incidents of the quarrel, and we know nothing of its cause, or of the grounds which induced Robert to set aside the claims of his sister and of the child she had borne to Cnut. But if greed and ambition were strong enough to set these aside, the claims of the sons of Æthelred, who were equally akin to him, gave Robert a fair pretext for attack. The Norman baronage at once backed him in his plan of invasion, and the duke set sail with the eldest of the two Æthelings, Ælfred.

William the Norman.

That Robert's fortune would have been that of the later conqueror may well be doubted. Cnut was at the height of his power, and the one chance of

success against him lay in an English rising which might have welcomed the Ætheling. But contest there was to be none. Robert's project broke down before the obstacle which has so often foiled attacks on the English shore; for a storm carried the Norman fleet down the Channel, and flung it wrecked on the coast of Jersey. It may have been the bitterness of this failure which drove the duke from his throne. Pilgrimages to the Sepulchre of Christ were now growing common in Normandy, and Robert announced his purpose of going as pilgrim to the Holy Land. But some prevision of the doom which awaited him drove the duke to name his successor ere he left. Claimants of the duchy there were in plenty, whether of the stock of Richard the Fearless or of the stock of Richard the Good. Child of his own, Robert had but one. In the little dell which parts the two cliffs, the two "fells" which have given their name to Falaise, one may still hear the chatter of the women who wash their linen at the brook. One of such a group, a tanner's daughter of the town, had caught the light fancy of Robert, and became the mother of his boy. At the moment of the child's birth the gossips noted the sturdy grasp with which his fingers seized and held the straws scattered on the floor. He would be no Norman, they laughed, to let go what once he had gripped. The laugh proved a true prophecy, but none of the laughers knew how mighty a prize that hand was in after days to grip. It was this boy, William, whom the duke forced his barons to choose as their future lord ere he left the land which he was never to see again; for after a few

CHAP. IX.

The Reign of Cnut.

1016-1035.

months' stay, he died on his return at Nicæa in July, 1035. The news of his death set Normandy on fire. The boy-duke was a child and a bastard, scorned for age as for shame of birth by the haughty lords whom the upgrowth of feudalism had made powers in the land. Even the dukes before him had found it hard to secure peace and order in a country which was filled with turbulent nobles, and whose people had still the wild northern blood with its love of lawless outbreak stirring in their veins. "Normans must be trodden down and kept under foot," sang one of their poets, "and he who bridles them may use them at his need." But no child-duke could bridle them. The great border nobles held William's rule at defiance. On every height and mound rose square keeps of solid stone, which helped their builders to hold the child-duke at bay. The land became a chaos of bloodshed and anarchy, while William saw his friends murdered beside him, and was driven from refuge to refuge by foes who sought his life.

Death of Cnut.

That the boy whose reign began in this wild storm was to tear England from the grasp of the Dane and to hold the land at his will, Cnut could not know. What he saw was the drifting away of the danger to his throne from the Æthelings across the Channel. From a boy-duke of eight years old, from this chaotic Normandy, small aid could come to the sons of Æthelred. But it was at the moment when his last difficulty vanished that Cnut's vigour suddenly gave way. Long and eventful as his reign had been he was still only a man of forty when he died, in November, 1035, leaving his work all unfinished.

The empire he had built up at once fell to pieces at the tidings of his death. Norway threw off the Danish yoke by driving out Cnut's son Swein, and chose as king the child Magnus, son of Olaf; while Swein fled to Denmark to share the kingdom with his brother Harthacnut till his death a few months after. For years to come Harthacnut's energies were wholly absorbed in guarding Denmark from the danger of Norwegian invasion, and his treaty with Magnus that if either of the kings died childless his dominions should pass to the other, showed the insecurity of the house of Cnut even in Denmark itself. The kingdom of England which was to have fallen to Harthacnut by his father's will, and doubtless was to have carried with it the overlordship of the whole empire, lay beyond the reach of the hardly-pressed ruler of Denmark; it was claimed by another son of Cnut, Harald, and itself fell asunder into two parts. A tragic fate, too, awaited the house of Cnut. Before seven years were past the same weakness which had cut short his own life had carried off his four children, not one of them having reached twenty-four years of age, and all childless save Gunhild, the wife of the German, Henry III., whose only child became a nun. The race of Gorm in the direct line of descent thus became extinct in little more than a hundred years after he had finished his work of the creation of the Danish kingdom.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOUSE OF GODWINE.

1035 TO 1053.

Position of Godwine.

THE death of Cnut left Godwine the greatest political power in the land. For years he had stood second only to the king in his English realm; as earl of Wessex he was master of the wealthiest and most powerful portion of the kingdom; and Cnut's absences on foreign campaigns had accustomed Englishmen to look on Godwine as the real centre of administrative government. The will of Cnut that he should be succeeded by Harthacnut in the English kingdom and the over-lordship of his northern realms, embodied no doubt not the king's purpose only, but that of the minister who had been his chief counsellor for fifteen years past; and represented that connexion with the North, that maintenance of a Scandinavian empire, which was as yet the policy of Godwine as it had been the policy of the king. For English as was his blood, and English as his policy was to become in later days, Godwine can have shared but little the general drift of English feeling against the Dane. As yet, indeed,

he must have seemed to Englishmen more Dane than Englishman. He had risen through the favour, he had guided the counsels of a Danish conqueror. His renown as a warrior had been won in Danish wars. He was wedded to a wife of Danish blood, and his two eldest children, Swein and Harold, bore the Danish names of Cnut's elder boys. It was no wonder therefore that he supported on Cnut's death the continuance of that union of England with Denmark which Harthacnut's succession secured.

Godwine's policy.

But the internal policy of both king and minister had made their outer policy impossible. Their whole system of government and administration had nursed English feeling into a new and vigorous life. To England Cnut had been an English king. If he had ruled other lands it was from Winchester, as dependencies of his English crown. The very Danes who had settled in England had learned through his long and peaceful reign to look on themselves as Englishmen, and on Denmark as a foreign land. But Harthacnut had scarcely been seen in England; from early childhood he had been trained in Denmark as its king, and it might well be thought that his rule meant the rule of England from a Danish throne. If the influence of Godwine and the Lady Emma at Winchester was strong enough to hold the West-Saxon earldom true to the claims of Harthacnut, the rest of England called for a national king. In pleading for the succession of Harthacnut, Godwine doubtless seemed to the people at large to be pleading for Danish rule. To his fellow earls he seemed no doubt pleading for his

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

own; and political rivalry united with national feeling in urging Earl Leofric of Mercia to withstand him. It marks the hold which Cnut's greatness had given him on the affections of Englishmen that even in setting aside Harthacnut they showed no will to set aside his father's line. Not a cry was raised for the children of Æthelred. Cnut's death, indeed, had at once been followed by a descent of the Ætheling Eadward with forty Norman ships at Southampton, but the attack had failed, and its failure was decisive.

Harald Harefoot.

It was Cnut's elder son Harald, "Harefoot," as he was called for his swiftness of foot, who, Dane as he was, at any rate represented an England separate from Denmark, that Leofric and the "liths-men," a merchant-gild of London, called to the throne. The hus-carls of the dead king were still with Emma at Winchester, and a word from Godwine would have plunged England into war. But warrior as he had shown himself in earlier days, it is the noblest trait in the character of Godwine throughout his political career that he shrank from civil blood-shed. The Witan gathered at Oxford to decide the question of the succession; Leofric demanded a division of the realm, and stubborn as was God-wine's resistance, he yielded at last to the doom of his fellow nobles. For the moment indeed his in-fluence, and it may be dread of the dead king's hus-carls, saved his own earldom, which was suffered to remain faithful to Harthacnut: but the rest of England took Harald for its king.

Division of England.

It was, however, impossible that such a division of the realm could last long. The strife which had

again broken the land into two parts was indeed the renewal of the old contest between Wessex and the rest of England, but the new attitude of London marked a decisive and important change. From the moment that London sided, not with Wessex but with England, the relation of parties was altered, and the ultimate victory of the national will over provincial jealousies could be no longer doubtful. If the new division of England between two claimants recalled the compromise of Olney, there was still a significant difference. It was the king of the joint Mercian and Northumbrian realms who was now over-lord, while the West-Saxon ruler sank to the position of under-king. Such a settlement struck a hard blow at the authority of Earl Godwine. Under Cnut he had been second only to the king in his power over all England; with a stranger such as Harthacnut he would have ruled supreme. But Leofric's action limited his power to Wessex, and even in Wessex it would seem as if Emma was a formidable rival, for if, as is stated, she had been already robbed by Harald of Cnut's treasure, she still preserved Cnut's body of hus-carls round her at Winchester. The continued absence of Harthacnut, too, who was still held in Denmark, weakened Godwine's position. Even in his own earldom men's minds turned from the absent to the present king; and it would seem that public feeling was wholly against Godwine's policy, for the Chronicle says "the cry was then greatly in favour of Harald."

Murder of Ælfred.

So difficult indeed was his position in Wessex, that it woke the Æthelings over sea to a fresh attempt.

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

It may be that Emma, hopeless of inducing Harthacnut to take possession of his West-Saxon kingdom, had turned to the children she had so long forgotten in Normandy. It was at any rate in peaceful guise, and with the pretext of visiting his mother, that Ælfred, the younger Ætheling, landed with a train of Normans at Dover, and rode through Surrey towards Winchester. He may have hoped that the old West-Saxon loyalty would spring into fresh life as he neared the West-Saxon capital; but whatever was his purpose it was ended by a brutal deed. At Guildford he was seized, carried over the Thames to Harald Harefoot, and by Harald's orders blinded, and left to die among the monks at Ely, while the Normans who followed him were put to the sword or sold for slaves. Even among Englishmen the cruel act was followed by a thrill of horror. "Viler deed was never done in this land since Dane came here," sang an English minstrel. Oversea it kindled among the Normans a thirst for vengeance which never ceased till the day of Senlac. And justly or unjustly, the Norman hate centred itself on Godwine. What his part in the matter had been it is hard to tell. Whether or not the seizure was made by Godwine's men is a matter of doubt, but it was made in Godwine's earldom; and the success of Ælfred would have overthrown Godwine's power. So general was the conviction that the deed lay at his door, that in the next reign the earl was charged with the guilt by Archbishop Ælfric, and forced to purge himself solemnly of the charge by oath before the altar. But though Godwine was acquitted by the Witan

of the charge of betrayal, his oath weighed little with Ælfred's kindred. Emma believed that it was the earl who had given up her son, and Eadward looked on him as his brother's murderer. It was no wonder that throughout the length and breadth of Normandy men held that the blood of Ælfred and of the Normans who followed him rested upon Godwine and his house.

Submission of Godwine.

The political action of the earl after the murder gave strength to the Norman belief. Godwine's loss of power had already been great. His influence was now bounded by Wessex, and even in Wessex it was seriously threatened. The compromise which reserved southern England to Harthacnut had every hour grown more impossible; men wearied of waiting for a king who never came, and it seemed as if Wessex had to choose between submission to Harald Harefoot, or a rising in favour of the line of Cerdic. But Godwine had as yet no mind to abandon the house of Cnut, though it seems as if despair of Harthacnut's coming was already swaying him to the side of Harald when Ælfred landed. His landing precipitated a change of policy which had already become inevitable, and the murder made further hesitation impossible. It was the alliance with Emma which had enabled the earl to hold Wessex for Harthacnut, and now that Emma was parted from him by her belief in his guilt, Godwine was forced from the position he had held so stubbornly. A new Witenagemot was gathered in 1037 to receive his submission. Emma was driven from the country; Harthacnut was forsaken by the earl and

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Harthacnut.

the men of Wessex, "for that he was too long in Denmark," and Harald became king over all the land.

Godwine remained earl of Wessex. But if he had forsaken Harthacnut, Emma was still faithful to her son. She seems to have cared little for her children by Æthelred, whom she had not seen since their boyhood, and to have concentrated her love on her younger children by Cnut. When the sentence of the Witenagemot therefore drove her from Winchester, she took refuge not in Normandy, which was now backing the Ætheling Eadward, but in Flanders. Her temper was active as of old. From "Baldwin's land" her messengers again pressed Harthacnut to strike a blow for his heritage; and in the winter of 1039 he sailed to Flanders to devise plans with his mother for a great invasion, and returned to the north at the opening of spring to put himself at the head of the fleet which he was preparing. But death had already removed his rival. In March, 1040, Harald Harefoot died at Oxford, and was carried to Westminster for burial. When Harthacnut touched at Bruges with his fleet he was met by the news that the English Witan had chosen him for their king; and in the following June he landed peacefully at Sandwich with the fleet of sixty vessels which had been gathered for the conquest of the kingdom. The fierce vengeance of the young sovereign, it may be of Emma, tore up his predecessor's body from its resting-place and flung it into a fen. Godwine again found himself in hard straits. He had to clear himself by solemn oath of the charge of betrayal of Ælfred brought against him by Arch-

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

bishop Ælfric. All memory of the stand he had made for the succession of Harthacnut was lost in the fresher memory of his submission to Harald. But costly gifts enabled him to retain his earldom through Harthacnut's reign. The two years of the young king's rule were marked by little save heavy taxation for payment of the Danish host which was to have won back England, and by the stern suppression of resistance to this Danegeld at Worcester. Discontent would probably have passed into revolt, had not the certainty of his approaching end turned men's minds to the Ætheling Eadward. The rise of a new sympathy for the house of Cerdic had been seen in the charge brought against Godwine, and the misrule of Harald and Harthacnut had rendered the succession of another Dane impossible. Even Harthacnut turned to his mother's son; and ere he died Eadward was summoned by the king himself from his refuge in Normandy, and recognized as heir to the throne.

The Ætheling Eadward.

A halo of tenderness spread in after-time round this last king of the old English stock. Legend told of his pious simplicity, his blitheness and gentleness of mood, the holiness that won him in after-time his title of Confessor, and enshrined him as a saint in the abbey church at Westminster. His was the one figure that stood out bright against the darkness when England lay trodden under foot by Norman conquerors; and so dear became his memory that liberty and independence itself seemed incarnate in his name. Instead of freedom the subjects of William or Henry called for the "good laws of Eadward the

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Confessor." But it was, in fact, as a mere shadow of the past that the exile returned to the land that had cast him out in his childhood. His blue eyes and flaxen hair, indeed, were those of his race; but the fragile form, the delicate complexion, the transparent womanly hands of Eadward told that no great warrior or ruler was to mount in him the throne of Æthelstan and Eadgar. He was a stranger too in the realm. Thirty years had passed since the child had been driven from English shores, and save in his fruitless descent on Southampton he had never touched them since. He had grown to manhood at the Norman court. His memories were not of the father who had died in his childhood, or of the mother who had forsaken him through long years of exile, but of the Norman dukes who had sheltered him, of his uncle Richard the Good, of his cousins Richard and Robert, of Robert's son William, the young kinsman who was battling with a storm of rebellion and treachery in the land which Eadward loved. In all but name, indeed, he was a Norman. He spoke the Norman tongue; he used in Norman fashion a seal for his charters; his sympathies lay naturally with the friends of his Norman life. The Englishmen among whom he found himself when Harthacnut summoned him to his court were all strangers to him, and the shy, timid exile of forty had neither Cnut's temper nor Cnut's youth to enable him to throw himself into new associations. It is characteristic of Eadward's sympathies that ailing as his half-brother was, he seems again to have quitted England after his recognition as heir to the crown,

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Coronation of Eadward.

and to have been still in Normandy in the summer of 1042, when Harthacnut "died as he stood at his drink" at a marriage feast in Lambeth.

It was not, indeed, till the Easter-tide of 1043 that Eadward saw himself crowned at Winchester by the two archbishops as English king. The months that lay between this crowning and the death of his predecessor had probably been months of busy negotiation with the English nobles, and above all with the earl of Wessex. For jealously as he had been looked on by Harthacnut, Godwine was still the greatest power in the land. Earl Siward was hardly settled in his distant Northumbria, and the mutilated Mercia of Leofric could not vie in extent or power with the great West-Saxon earldom. Wealth, character, political experience, the memory of his long supremacy under Cnut, and of his personal sway for two years over Wessex after Cnut's death, as well as a sense of the skill and daring with which he had faced and lived through the ill-will of Harald and the hatred of Harthacnut, gave Godwine in fact at this moment a weight beyond that of any other Englishman. Nor did it seem likely that this weight would be thrown on Eadward's side. The great house to which his wife belonged seems to have clung almost as closely to the earl as his own sons. Two of her brother Ulf's children, Beorn and Osbeorn, were in England at this time, and closely linked to the earl; while their elder brother, Swein Estrithson, as he was called, was fighting in the northern seas for the crown of Denmark. But at the news of Harthacnut's death, Swein sailed back to England to claim a crown which seemed easier

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

to win. Kinship, gratitude, political tradition alike seemed to sway Godwine to Swein's side both in his claims to the Danish and the English thrones. The earl owed all to Cnut, and Swein was not only his own wife's nephew, but he was Cnut's sister's son, and nearest in blood, now Harthacnut was dead, to the king who had raised Godwine to the power he held. His support of Cnut's will, his fidelity to Harthacnut, show that three years before Godwine had looked to a union of the crowns of England and Denmark as of high political value, and such a union might easily have been brought about by the crowning of Swein, and his return to the North with a force of Englishmen. But whatever may have been the strength of Godwine's family sympathies, he must soon have seen that it was impossible to indulge them. As in his stubborn effort to secure half England for Harthacnut, Godwine found himself face to face with the will of a whole people. The worthlessness of Cnut's children had wiped out the memory of Cnut's greatness and wisdom. It was indeed the very policy of Cnut, the English and national character of his rule, which had roused into new and stronger life the national consciousness of Englishmen, a consciousness which now expressed itself in the sudden assertion of their will to have no stranger to rule over them, but one of their own royal stock. Before King Harthacnut was buried, says the chronicle, "all folk chose Eadward for their king."

State of Normandy.

That there was still dispute among the nobles at the Witenagemot shows that the acclamation of the people found fierce opposition, while the assertion of

Swein Estrithson in after days that his claim was bought off by a promise of the crown should he outlive his rival, points to intricate negotiations before Eadward was accepted by all. The negotiations may have been aided in some measure by pressure from the Norman court. The earlier troubles of the young duke's reign were now settling down, and under the guardianship of Ralf of Wacey the Norman baronage was brought back into a partial obedience, and the pacification of Normandy was aided by a movement which fell in with the religious excitement of the time. In the universal disorder which raged over feudal Gaul men turned to the Church as the one body which had preserved some sense of its duty to save men from oppression and bloodshed. Anarchy had been worst in the south, and from the south came a reaction against it. The bishops and abbots of Aquitaine met in synod to bid men lay aside their arms, to denounce the warfare and robbery about them, and to proclaim a "Truce of God." As the preachers preached this new gospel, the crowds they gathered stretched out their hands to heaven with shouts of "Peace! Peace!" The "Covenant" spread like fire through southern and eastern France; but the first zeal of its preachers had to content itself with more moderate demands on human passion before it could penetrate to the west, and the universal peace dwindled to a suspension of arms from the sunset of Wednesday to the sunrise of the following Monday. Even this proved too hard a doctrine for Norman ears. But a timely famine backed its advocates with signs of the wrath of God,

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

and the duke pressed the truce on his subjects. A great council of nobles and prelates gathered at Caen, in 1042, enacted that for four days and five nights in every week men should be free from dread of wound or death, and castle and borough and village from dread of attack.

Duke William.

The "Truce," well kept or ill, aided the young duke's efforts to restore order in the land. William was no longer the mere child whom his father left behind him. Young as he was, and he was still not fifteen, he must have been already showing signs of the huge stature, the giant-like strength, which lifted him in after days out of the common herd of men. From boyhood he was a mighty hunter, and the twang of the bow that no arm but his could wield was heard in the Norman woodlands. The temper too which marked his later years was ripening under the stress of his eventful history. No boy ever had a rougher training. Friends had been hewn down or poisoned beside him, and he had been driven from refuge to refuge by foes who would have slain him if they could. The watchfulness, the patience, the cunning, which lay throughout his life side by side with a mighty energy and an awful wrath in William's temper, had their first upgrowth in these early days of peril; and with them must have been already awakening, under the same pressure, that political sense, that wide outlook and clearness of vision, which lifts William so high above the statesmen of his time.

Eadward and Normandy.

But even if the young duke himself had looked with indifference on the fortunes of a kinsman whom

he had known from his childhood, the sympathies of his nobles would have been with one whom they looked upon as himself almost a Norman; and if we set aside the Norman boast that England at this juncture yielded to the threats of the court of Rouen, we may take the boast at least as an indication that the influence of that court was used to support the claim of Eadward. Even after his recognition as king, this influence must still have been employed in overcoming his fears. Eadward seems to have hung back from the crown. The men among whom he was to go were strangers to him and worse than strangers. Those who were to be his counsellors had been the counsellors of kings who had long held from him the throne of his race. Those who were to be his warriors were the men who had but a year before driven off his fleet from Southampton. The memory of his brother's murder hung about him, rankling in his mind, as we shall see, for years; and the most powerful of the earls who called him to the English throne was the man whose hands he believed to be red with his brother's blood. If the Norman story be true, it was not till hostages for his safety had been sent to the court at Rouen that Eadward would consent to cross the seas. When he landed on the shores of his new realm he brought with him a train that showed his reliance on Norman support. In later days William asserted that his cousin, prescient of his coming childlessness, had promised in the fashion which was getting common in the northern states, and of which there had been many instances among the Danish kings, to bequeath his realm to him on his

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

death. That this was so is likely enough, though the bequest was one which English nobles were hardly likely to recognize. But in any case the young duke must have seen the shadow of his after-conquest falling over England, as its new king sailed from Norman shores with a train of Norman knights and Norman churchmen. Foremost among these in rank was Eadward's nephew Ralf, a son of his sister Godgifu, by her Norman marriage with Drogo of Mantes. Another Norman kinsman, Odo or Odda, was probably in his train; and Richard the son of Scrob may have been among the Norman knights who formed the king's guard. Two Norman priests, William and Ulf, came as his chaplains. But closer to Eadward stood one to whom he had owed much in his exile, and his affection for whom was of long standing, Robert, abbot of Jumiéges. Robert either accompanied or soon followed the king to England, and was soon seen to possess his confidence as no other man possessed it.

The state of England.

From the moment of their landing, however, the king and his group of strangers found themselves lonely and helpless in the land. With his accession, indeed, the long struggle of the ealdormen for a virtual independence seemed at last to have reached its aim. The land appeared about to break up into three great fiefs, as little dependent on the central monarchy as the fiefs of the continent. Siward ruled as he listed in the north, and no royal writ ran across the Humber. Leofric was almost as much his own master in Mid-Britain. Wessex, instead of giving a firm standing-ground to the house of Cerdic, was

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

now in the hands of a master who overawed the crown. Even more than in Cnut's days Godwine's voice was supreme in the council-chamber. The policy and government were alike his own, and in both he showed his wonted ability. Without, indeed, the realm was secured from attack by the turn of foreign affairs; for Normandy was a friend to the Norman-bred king, and the strife between Magnus of Norway and Swein Estrithson for the throne of Denmark shielded England from any invasion by the northmen. Friendly embassies, too, came from the French court, while the earlier marriage of the Emperor Henry III. with Gunhild, a daughter of Cnut and Emma, had linked him by blood to Eadward, and strengthened the friendly intercourse between the German and English courts which had gone on from the days of Eadward the Elder. Near home Gruffydd, the son of Llewelyn, was building up a formidable power over the western border, but he was too busy as yet with his Welsh rivals to seem a a serious danger; while in the north Macbeth, who had lately risen through the murder of King Duncan to the throne of Scotland, showed himself a peaceful neighbour. It was rather within than without that Godwine's work had to be done, and that it was well done was proved by the peace of the land; while the popularity which he won in Wessex shows his good government of his own earldom.[1]

[1] The political structure of Cnut's administration indeed had been tested by the troubles and revolutions which followed on his death; and the new strength of the crown was shown in the fact that none of these troubles had in the least affected that

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

But however wise and successful Godwine's rule might be, we shall see in years to come how bitterly it

structure. Even the fourfold division of the English earldoms and the severance of Wessex from the crown was retained, in spite of the return of the line of Wessex to the throne. Part of this no doubt may be due to the influence of Godwine, but in fact the continuance of Godwine's power may in itself be looked upon as a proof of the strength of the administrative system and tradition of which he was the embodiment. That system remained indeed in all respects firmly established throughout the whole reign of the Confessor to the very conquest of the Normans. The military organization continued unchanged, as we see later from the hus-carls quartered at towns like Wallingford and Dorchester; while from the description of the new armament used by Harold in his later wars with the Welsh, it was clearly with this picked body of troops, and not with the fyrd of the neighbouring shires, that he won his victories in South Wales; and they formed the real strength of his army both at Stamford Bridge and at Senlac. Of the Hoard again we catch a glimpse in the legend of Hugolin, which shows that the Danegeld, if still an unpopular tax, was yet rigidly levied, and formed the main-spring of the royal finance; and in the troubles of Emma we see the first instance of that vital importance to the crown of the possession of the hoard or treasure, as well as of the command of the body of hus-carls whose pay was drawn from it. The administrative machinery too was not only maintained, but developed in the more organized form which the Royal Chapel assumed under Godwine and Harold, an incidental proof of which is given in the adoption of the Norman practice of authenticating all documents issued in the king's name by the royal seal; a step which created the Chancellor, as the Hoard had already created the Treasurer, and as the levy of Danegeld, and the necessity of giving formal acquittance of the sums levied under it to the sheriffs, must already, in however inchoate a way, have originated the system of the Exchequer. With the consolidation of the royal administration no doubt there went on also a corresponding developement of the royal justice, in the shape of appeals to the king himself from subordinate jurisdictions; and with the growing

Siward of Northumbria.

was resented by the king who found himself a puppet in his hands. Eadward was indeed powerless in his realm. He could not even hope, like his predecessors, to snatch a fragment of authority by pitting one great noble against another. In Northumbria Siward had but just won his earldom by a deed of blood. By his marriage with the daughter of a former Northumbrian earl, Ealdred, he had in 1038 become master of Deira or Yorkshire, but Bernicia had passed to Ealdred's brother Eadwulf. Three years later, however, Eadwulf was cut down at the very court of Harthacnut by Siward, who thus in 1041 became invested with the whole Northumbrian earldom from Humber to Tweed. The new earl, with his giant stature, his Danish blood, the personal vigour which earned him the surname of Digera or the Strong, was a fitting representative of the district over which he ruled. His stern, rough handling kept the wild Northumbrians in awe; but dreaded as his ruthlessness might be, it brought little peace or order to the land.[1] Northumbria indeed stood apart from the rest of Britain. The old anarchy had

pressure of public business we find that the great office which had been instituted by Cnut in his appointment of a Secundarius, was continued under the Confessor in the rule of Godwine and Harold, the predecessors of the Norman Justiciar. At the time of the Norman Conquest therefore, the administrative system which has sometimes been called Norman was already growing up at the English court, and the true work of the Conqueror and his successors lay in its extension and developement.

[1] "Licet dux Siwardus ex feritate judicii valde timeretur tamen tanta gentis illius crudelitas et Dei incultus habebatur ut vix triginta vel viginti in uno comitatu possent ire quin aut interficerentur aut deprædarentur ab insidiantium latronum multitudine" (Vit. Edw. (Luard), 421).

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

deepened with the settlement of the Danes. The roads were haunted with robbers, so that men could hardly travel with safety even in companies of thirty at a time; its distance from the south made the attendance of its thegns at the Witenagemots scant and uncertain; and the visits of the king, which in Eadgar's day were few, seem to have ceased altogether under the Confessor. It was the home of savage feuds, of strife handed on from father to son, even in the house of its earls. Marriage sat as lightly on them as bloodshedding;[1] and the rude violence

[1] Earl Uhtred, who held Northumbria under Æthelred and Cnut, married the daughter of Bishop Ealdhun of Durham, and with her got a share of the bishop's lands. He sent her back however to her father, and returned her lands with her; and took in her stead a rich burgher's daughter, whose father gave her to him on the simple terms that he should kill his enemy Thurbrand. But as he either could not or would not kill Thurbrand, the burgher's daughter in time ceased to be his wife, and he wedded Æthelred's daughter Ælfgifu (Sim. Durh. "De Obsess. Dunelm." (Twysden), p. 80). And with this loose morality went savage bloodshedding, and feuds of vendetta handed on from father to son. If Uhtred could not kill Thurbrand, Thurbrand owed him no thanks for it. When Uhtred submitted to Cnut, and came to do homage "at a place called Wiheal" (Freeman, "Norm. Conq." i. 376,) "a curtain was drawn aside," and behind it stood Thurbrand with armed men, who forthwith cut down Uhtred and forty of his companions. The feud slumbered till Ealdred, Uhtred's son by the bishop's daughter, got his father's earldom. Then, whether by law or by murder, Thurbrand was slain. His son Carl took up the feud, and he and Earl Ealdred went about seeking each other's lives. Friends strove to make peace between them; they were reconciled; they became even sworn brothers (exchanging blood?); they vowed to go on pilgrimage to Rome together; and when driven back by stress of weather, Carl invited Ealdred to feast at his house and hunt in his woods. There in the woodland he slew him, and a stone cross on the

of their life was unchecked even by religion. Churches gave no sanctuary against deeds of blood, and since the conquest of the north by the Danes not a single monastery of any historic importance survived in the land once thronged by religious houses. Northumbria, indeed, wild and uncivilized as it was, gave Siward work enough to do in simply holding it down, and as yet prevented any real danger to the power of Godwine from the northern earl.

Leofric of Mercia.

Leofric of Mercia, on the other hand, had held his earldom since the days of Cnut, and claimed to be descended from royal English blood. At the death of Cnut his influence, as we have seen, had been strong enough to match the power of Godwine, and to bring about the division of England between

spot recalled the crime for centuries after (Sim. Durh. "De Obsess. Dunelm." (Twysden), 81). The murder of his brother Eadwulf, who succeeded him in Bernicia, began the fortunes of Siward. But Siward had married Ealdred's daughter, and if he himself slew Ealdred's brother, the blood-feud with Thurbrand's house for Ealdred's death fell none the less to his son. Some years after the Norman conquest, as Carl's sons were feasting "in the house of their elder brother at Seterington in Yorkshire," and unarmed, a body of Earl Waltheof's young thegns fell suddenly upon them. "The whole family, all the sons and grandsons of Carl, were cut off save one son, Sumorled, who chanced not to be present, and another, Cnut, whose character had won him such general love that the murderers could not bring themselves to slay him" (Freem. "Norm. Conq." iv. 525; Sim. Durh. "Gest. Reg." a. 1073, and more largely, "De Obsess. Dunelm." (Twysden), pp. 81, 82). The young thegns came back with spoil—"deletis filiis et nepotibus Carli reversi sunt multa in variis speciebus spolia reportantes" (Sim. Durh. "De Obsess. Dunelm." (Twysden), p. 82), while Waltheof "avi sui interfectionem gravissimâ clade vindicavit" (ib. p. 81).

MER... ...ARY
OF [redacted]

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Harald and Harthacnut; and his importance must have increased with the submission of all England to Harald in 1037. To the end of his life he remained amongst the foremost powers of the land, and took rank as one of the three great earls. In mere extent, however, Mercia was now but a shadow of its former self. Even in the days of Cnut the Hwiccas of Worcestershire formed a separate government; under Harthacnut the breaking up of Mercia was yet more complete. The Magesætas of Hereford were gathered into a distinct earldom on the west, while the eastern provinces of Mercia had been shorn off to form a new earldom of the Middle-English of Leicester, with probably Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. Some of these districts returned in later days to the house of Leofric, and even at this time they may have still owned his supremacy, but his direct rule seems to have been confined to Cheshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and the border of North Wales.

Godwine of Wessex.

Not only did Godwine's experience of government, his wealth, his ability, lift him high above Siward or Leofric, but the very earldom he held far outweighed the earldoms of Mid-England or the North. Wessex embraced almost all southern England, and southern England was the wealthiest and most important part of the realm. The full effects indeed of the separation of Wessex from the crown, and its formation into an earldom, could hardly be felt in Cnut's day, while all England was still but a part of a larger empire. But they were felt in the days of the Confessor, when the hereditary king of the West-Saxons found himself displaced from his own native

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

realm by Godwine and his house. Eadward was the first descendant of Ælfred who was not lord of Wessex. He had indeed no local hold on the land at all; he was simply king, and it may possibly have been owing to this that he found his home no longer at Winchester but at Westminster. The fact indeed that this creation of a West-Saxon earldom, so obviously a mere expedient to meet the exigencies of the Danish rule, was not at once reversed, and the old connexion of Wessex with the crown restored on the accession of the Confessor, shows how absolutely powerless that king was from the first in the hands of Earl Godwine. Nor could Eadward look to either of the rival earls for aid in disputing with the all-powerful Godwine the mastery of his kingdom. And yet by a singular irony of fate it was just through this mastery of Godwine's that England remained a kingdom at all. Had the three earldoms been of equal weight, or their possessors men of the same temper, the energies of Godwine as of his fellow-earls might have been spent in the building up of a separate dominion. It was his superiority of power as well as his keener ambition that drew him from the mere establishment of a great fief to the larger ambition of ruling the land.

His policy.

With such an aim the earl saw that his profit lay, not in weakening or annihilating the authority of the crown, but in seizing that authority for his own purposes, and in paving the way by a dexterous use of Eadward for the succession of the house of Godwine to the throne. Such a design can alone account for the steady policy of annexation by which he at

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

once began to draw all England into his own hands or those of his kindred. The importance of keeping watch over Wales, and of preserving the means of communication with it as Gruffydd built up a national sovereignty, may explain the establishment of Godwine's eldest son, Swein, in the border-district of Hereford. But a new earldom was created for him by the addition to this district of two other Mercian shires, the shires of Oxford and Gloucester; and this earldom was again swelled by the detachment of Berkshire and Somerset from Godwine's own Wessex. The position of Oxford as commanding the line of the Thames, and of Gloucester as commanding the lower Severn, gave Swein's earldom a military as well as a political importance. But while in Swein the house of Godwine pressed upon the west, a grant of the East-Anglian earldom to the second son, Harold, gave it the mastery of the east. In the very heart of England Godwine set his nephew Beorn, a brother of Swein Estrithson, as earl of the Middle-English about Leicester. The addition to Beorn's earldom of Nottingham and the old land of the Gyrwas and Lindiswaras made him master of the Trent, as Swein of the Severn and the Thames; and by 1045 the whole English coast from Humber round to Severn mouth had passed into the hands of the house of Godwine.

Extension of his power.

Nor was this all. Two years after the king's coronation Eadgyth, Godwine's daughter, became Eadward's wife. We can hardly doubt the meaning of this step. In setting Eadgyth beside the king Godwine aimed at meeting the secret hostility of

the court, and detaching Eadward from the Norman councillors who, as he was conscious, were busy working against him. The influence of Robert of Jumiéges, who had been appointed bishop of London a year before, was as certain as his ill-will, and the memory of his brother's doom was stirred busily in Eadward's mind by the strangers round him. But so vast a stride towards the mastery of the realm as Godwine was making would of itself awake Eadward's suspicion, and hardly fail to rouse jealousy in other minds besides the king's. The house of Godwine had no hold on the North. In central England Leofric could hardly look with satisfaction on the advancing supremacy of his old rival. Godwine might still indeed have defied the efforts of the Norman courtiers, and the jealousies of his fellow earls, had he retained the confidence of the nation at large. But the national trust which his good government had won was at this moment shaken by the deeds of one who stood next to him in his own house.

Difficulties of Godwine.

The first blow at Godwine's power came from the lawless temper of his eldest son, Swein. In the opening of 1046, a year after Eadgyth's marriage, Swein carried off the abbess of Leominster from her nunnery, and sent her back great with child. Such an act was too daring an outrage on the religious feeling of the country to pass unheeded. Ere Christmas came the young earl fled, outlawed it would seem, from his earldom to the court of Bruges; in the summer of 1047 he again left Baldwin's land, perhaps to take part in the war in the northern seas. Godwine was carefully watching the changes which went

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

on in the North, for both the rival claimants to the dominions of Harthacnut, Magnus and Swein, alike laid claim to the English crown. But a year before Magnus had threatened England with invasion, and a great fleet had been gathered at Sandwich to meet his expected attack. It had been averted by successes of Swein Estrithson, which drew the host of Magnus to Denmark instead of the Channel; but the Norwegian king was now again victorious, and his triumph promised a renewal of the danger to England. Swein had been driven from all but a fragment of the Danish realm; the union of Denmark and Norway seemed certain; and the forces of the two realms in the hands of Magnus would in such a case have been thrown on English shores.

Opposition to his policy.

It was no wonder therefore that Swein hastened to his cousin's help; or that Godwine proposed in the Witan of 1047 to send a squadron of fifty ships to support his nephew's cause. But politic as the plan was, it met with a resistance which shows how greatly the earl's influence was shaken. The proposal, it is said at Leofric's instigation, was rejected, and Swein Estrithson was left to fight his battle alone. The result was the coming of that peril which Godwine foresaw. A new and overwhelming defeat drove Swein from his last hold in Denmark, and brought about the submission of the whole Danish kingdom to Magnus. Luckily for England, the conqueror's death at once followed his victory, and the two northern lands again parted from one another. Harald Hardrada became king in Norway: Swein Estrithson was welcomed back by the Danes; and the strife which shielded

The House of Godwine.

1035-1058.

England from Scandinavian attack broke out afresh on more equal terms. The decision of the Witan was far from proving any heedlessness of the safety of the realm; had the attack come which Godwine feared, an English fleet was ready at this very time to meet it in the Channel. Their will was simply against intervention in the North itself, against actual meddling in a distant quarrel, and no doubt against spending English blood in the support of a nephew of Godwine. Enough, it may have been thought, had been done for Godwine's house at home. England could hardly be called on to spend blood and treasure in winning a throne for his nephew abroad. But behind this natural hesitation of wiser men stirred the bitter enmity of the Norman group which Eadward had gathered round him. Even at this moment their opposition took a new vigour from the events which were passing over sea.

William and Lanfranc.

Ever since his kinsman left Normandy for the English shores, William had been slowly rising to his destined greatness. Troubles on the French frontier, occasional outbreaks of a baron here and there, failed to shake the hold on the land which tightened with every day of the young duke's grasp. Round him the men who were to play their part in our history were already grouping themselves. William Fitz-Osbern was growing up as William's friend and adviser. The duke's half-brother, Odo, was already Bishop of Bayeux. But chance had brought a wiser counsellor to William's side than Odo or Fitz-Osbern. In the early years of his rule, Lanfranc, a wandering scholar from Lombardy, had opened a school at

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Avranches. Lanfranc was the son of a citizen of Pavia, where he had won fame for skill in the Roman law. Whether driven out by some civil revolution, or drawn by love of teaching to the west, Lanfranc made his way to Normandy; and troubled as was the time, the fame of his school at Avranches soon spread throughout the land. A religious conversion however interrupted his work. Lanfranc quitted his scholars to seek the poorest and lowliest monastery he could find in Normandy, and came at last to a little valley edged in with woods of ash and elm through which a "bec" or rivulet ran down to the Risle, where Herlouin, a knight of Brionne, had found shelter from the world. Herlouin was busy building an oven with his own hands when the stranger greeted him with "God save you." "Are you a Lombard?" asked the knight-abbot, struck with the foreign look of the man. "I am," he replied: and praying to be made a monk, Lanfranc fell down at the mouth of the oven and kissed Herlouin's feet. The religious impulse was a real one; but in spite of the break from the world and its learning which Lanfranc sought in this retirement at Bec, he was destined to be known as a great scholar and statesman rather than as a saint. It was in vain that he dreamed of seeking a yet sterner refuge in some solitude. The abbot's will chained him to the monastery, and Lanfranc's teaching raised Bec in a few years into the most famous school in Christendom. The zeal which drew scholars and nobles alike to the little house of Herlouin was in fact the first wave of an intellectual movement which was now spreading from Italy to

the ruder countries of the West. The whole mental activity of the time concentrated itself in the group of scholars who gradually gathered round Lanfranc; the fabric of the canon law and of mediæval scholasticism, with the philosophic scepticism which first awoke under its influence, all trace their origin to Bec. But Lanfranc was to be more than a great teacher. The eye of the young duke saw in the Lombard one who was fitted to second his own ardent genius; and in no long time the prior of Bec stood high among his counsellors.

Revolt in Normandy.

William was soon to need wise counsel. Young as he was, the pressure of his heavy hand already warned the strongest that they must fight or obey. In the more settled land about the Seine order was now fairly established; and in the coming contest it held firmly by the duke. But in the Bessin and Cotentin, where the old heathen and Norse traditions had been strengthened by recent Danish settlements, the passion for independence was strong. The greatest lords of the Cotentin and the Bessin, Neal of St. Sauveur, Randolf of Bayeux, Hamon of Thorigny, Grimbald of Plessis, waited but the signal to rise. And in 1047 the signal was given. Hitherto his bastard birth had done William little hurt, for of the descendants of Richard the Fearless or Richard the Good who might have claimed his duchy, some were churchmen, some had perished in the troubles of his youth, one had been his guardian and protector; while his cousin Guy, grandson of Richard the Good by his daughter's marriage with a Count of Burgundy, had been reared from childhood

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

with William and gifted with broad lands at Vernon and Brionne. But Guy saw in the temper of the West a chance of winning the duchy from the bastard, and its lords were quick at answering his call.

Val-ès-Dunes.

So secret was the plot, that William was hunting in the woods of the Cotentin when the revolt broke out, and only a hasty flight from Valognes to Falaise saved him from capture. As he dashed through the fords of Vire with Grimbald on his track the Bessin and Cotentin were already on fire behind him; and their barons gathered at Bayeux swore on the relics of the saints that they would smite William wherever they might find him. They were soon to find him on the battle-field. The men of the more settled duchy beyond the Dive, the men of Caux and Hiesmes, the burghers of Lisieux and Rouen, of Evreux and Falaise, stood firmly by the duke. But William had no mind to stand the shock alone. Hardly twenty as he was, his cool head already matched the hot ardour of his youth; and he rode across the border to throw himself at the feet of the French king and beg for aid. The old alliance between the house of Hrolf and the house of Hugh Capet, shaken as it had been of late, was still strong enough to secure the help he sought; and King Henry himself headed a body of troops which stood beside William's Normans on the field of Val-ès-Dunes to the south-eastward of Caen. The fight that followed was little more than a fierce combat of horse surging backwards and forwards over the slopes of the upland on which it was fought, and ended in the rout of the rebel host. The mills of the

Orne were choked with the bodies of men slain in its fords or drowned in its stream.

William's victory.

The victory at Val-ès-Dunes was the turning point in William's career. It was not merely that he had shown himself a born warrior, that horse and man had gone down before his lance, that he had faced and routed the bravest warriors of the Bessin; nor was it only that with this victory the struggle of the wild northman element in the duchy against civilization, against the French tongue, against union with Western Christendom, was to cease. It was that William had mastered Normandy. "Normans," said a Norman poet, "must be trodden down and kept under foot, for he only that bridles them may use them at his need;" and the young duke had bridled them to use them in a need which was soon to come. The valour which had so sullenly withstood him on the downs above Caen, gave itself from that hour into its master's hands, and, mere youth of twenty as he was, William stood lord of Normandy as no duke had stood its lord before, lord of a Normandy whose restless vigour was spending itself as yet in the winning of realms for adventurers over sea, but was ready to spend itself now in winning realms for its duke nearer home. Far off as the conquest was, it was at Val-ès-Dunes that William fought his first fight for the crown of Cerdic. It was the men who had sworn to smite him on the relics of Bayeux who were to win for him England.

France and Anjou.

It was France, however, rather than England, which directly felt the change in William's attitude, for in the year after Val-ès-Dunes, William measured swords

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035. 1053.

with the greatest of the then French powers. Girt in on every side by great feudatories, the crowned descendants of Hugh Capet had been saved from utter ruin by the firm support of the dukes of Normandy, and the counts of Anjou. It was the Norman sword which had aided them to resist Burgundian disloyalty, and it was the sword of Norman and Angevin alike which saved them from the ambitious supremacy of the house of Blois. But it was just these two powers whose growth had now changed them from supports of the French crown into its most formidable dangers, and the policy of the French kings, unable to meet either single-handed, became more and more a policy of balance between them. At this time Anjou was the more pressing of the two foes. From a small province on either side the lower course of the Mayenne, with a few castles scattered over the lands of Blois and Touraine to the south and to the east of it, it had grown into the largest and most powerful state of central France. Southern Touraine had been gradually absorbed. Northern Touraine had been won bit by bit. A victory of the Angevin count, Geoffrey Martel, left Poitou at his mercy, and the seizure of Maine brought his dominion to the Norman frontier. Geoffrey was soon at war with the king, and it was to purchase William's aid against this powerful vassal that King Henry had helped the duke to put down the revolt of the Cotentin.

War with Anjou.

The bargain was faithfully carried out, and the victory of Val-ès-Dunes was hardly won when the young duke and his Normans joined Henry in an

attack on the Count of Anjou. A wooded hill-country formed the southern border of the Norman duchy, and from the hills of Vire and Mortagne the rivers Mayenne and Sarthe flow down to the heart of Geoffrey's country to Le Mans and Angers. It was on this border that war broke out in 1048, centering round Domfront and Alençon, towns which command the head-waters of the two streams. But the duke's success was as rapid and decisive as before. While Geoffrey marched to meet the French army, William surprised Alençon, avenged the insult of its burghers, who had hung skins over its walls on his approach, with shouts of "Hides for the tanner," by ruthlessly hewing off hands and feet, and returned as rapidly to secure the surrender of Domfront. The quick, sturdy blows put an end to the war; Geoffrey Martel made peace with king and duke, and the peace left the two fortresses he had won in the hands of William, to serve as a base for his future conquest of Maine.

Norman aims in England.

If Val-ès-Dunes had left William master of Normandy, the defeat of Count Geoffrey left him first among the powers of France. But it was not France only which was watching William's course. His new strength told at once on English politics. The victory of his cousin over the rebels who would have made him a puppet duke, must have spurred Eadward to struggle against the earl who had made him a puppet king, and his little group of foreign counsellors would watch the triumphs that followed Val-ès-Dunes as if every victory of William was a blow at Godwine and his house. We shall soon see that William himself

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

was watching closely the struggle between Godwine and the king. What shape the young duke's dreams may have taken, whether he had already conceived the design which was two years later disclosed of following his cousin Eadward on the English throne, we cannot tell. But communications must have already passed between the Norman group around Eadward and the court of Rouen; and the nomination of an English prelate from among the circle of Norman courtiers showed the new confidence which Eadward was drawing from his cousin's victories. In the year of William's triumph over Geoffrey Martel one of the king's Norman chaplains, Ulf, was raised to the see of Dorchester, a diocese which stretched from the Humber to the Thames. As yet, however, there was nothing in William's attitude to mark hostility to the house of Godwine. But the next step in the young duke's policy was to set their attitude to each other in a clearer light.

Flanders.

Already the course of events was drawing England into relations with the western world at once closer and more extensive than any she had formed since the days of Æthelstan. The first breath of the later Conquest passes over us as English politics interweave themselves with the politics, not of Scandinavia only, but of Normandy and France, of Flanders and Boulogne, of the Empire and the Papacy. It was to this wider field that the contest between Godwine and the Normans was to drift; and to follow the thread of English politics at this moment we have to turn to Flanders. Flanders was now one of the leading states of Western Christendom. The wild reach of

forest and fen which Cæsar had seen stretching along the Scheldt and the Lower Rhine, a region veiled in bitter mist and swept by the frost-winds of the northern seas, had been subdued by the Roman sword, and won from the dying empire by men of kindred stock with the English conquerors of Britain. A portion of this wild land, the great triangle of territory between the Scheldt, the Channel, and the Somme, which was known as Flanders, became a county in the storm of the Danish inroads. Its counts won their lordship by hard fighting against the northmen. But the quick rise of Flanders to wealth and greatness was due to the temper of the Flemings themselves. At the time we have reached their steady toil was already laying the foundation of that industrial greatness which the land preserved through the Middle Ages, and of that commercial activity which was to make it ere a hundred years had gone by the mart of the world. The industry of the Flemings found from the first a shelter in their counts. All the traditions of the country ascribed to its rulers a love of justice which lifted them above the princes of their time. Story told how Lyderic, the founder of their race, beheaded his eldest son for taking a basket of apples from an old woman without payment. The very feuds of the land were bounded by strict rule. Baron might wage his petty war with baron; but old usage and enacted law forbade the extension of the strife to husbandman or trader. Hot as the quarrel might be, too, fighting was its only outlet, for none might harry or imprison within the count's domain.

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Its importance.

It was in the peace and order which this strict rule secured that the Flemings toiled their way to wealth. The counts understood and identified themselves with their people's love of industry and freedom, and Arnulf the Old, our Ælfred's grandson by the mother's side, became the Ælfred of Flemish history. The little boroughs of the land grew up for the most part beneath the shelter of its vast abbeys; names such as those of St. Omer, St. Gherlain, St. Amand, St. Vedast, show that municipal life was almost a creation of the Church. Even the lordly Ghent of after days was but a borough which had clustered round the abbey of St. Bavon. But it was to Arnulf that tradition ascribed the institution of the great fairs which raised them into centres of commercial life, as well as the introduction of the weaving trade which made Flanders the earliest manufacturing country of Western Christendom. With equal sagacity the counts saw that the most precious gift they could confer on this rising industry was the gift of freedom. "Little charm," says Baldwin of Mons, "is there in a town for men to dwell therein save it be sheltered by the uttermost liberty." The freedom of settlement, the security of trade, the right of justice within their walls, the liberty of bequest and succession, which the Flemish boroughs were already acquiring, were soon to ripen into an almost complete self-government. The rapid prosperity of the country gave a corresponding importance to its rulers; and this importance was heightened by the situation of Flanders as a borderland between France and the Empire. Feudatories of the Emperor

as of the king at Paris, though for different portions of their dominion, the counts soon learned to use their double allegiance to win a practical independence of either suzerain. The present ruler of Flanders, Baldwin of Lille, had reached a yet higher position than his predecessors. His wife was the sister of King Henry of France. He was among the most powerful vassals of the Empire.

Revival of the Empire.

The Empire had risen at this moment to a height unknown since the days of Charles the Great; a height from which it was from that hour slowly to fall. The wide dominion of Charles had been broken up by the quarrels of his house, the incursions of the northmen, and the rise of a national temper in the peoples whom he had bound into a state. But the tradition of a single Christendom with one temporal as with one spiritual head lived on in the minds of men; and in the German king Otto the Great the tradition again became a living fact. Conqueror of Italy, crowned at Rome as Emperor of the world, the claims of Otto to the supremancy of Western Christendom found no acknowledgment in Spain, in what we now call France, nor in England; in our own land indeed the assumption of imperial titles by Eadgar and Æthelred looks like a purposed answer to the imperial claims of Otto and his successors. But even apart from its claims over realms which denied its sway, the Empire stood from the hour of this revival high both in strength and in extent above all other European powers. Lords of Germany and of the greater part of Italy, of the subject realms of Bohemia, Moravia, and Poland to the east, of the

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

equally subject realms of Lorraine and Burgundy to the west, wielding a more doubtful supremacy over Denmark and Hungary, the successors of Otto saw their rule owned from the Eider to the Liris, from Bruges to Vienna, from the Vistula to the Rhone.

The religious movement.

It was this mighty domain which passed in 1039, three years before Eadward's accession to the English throne, into the hands of the second of the Franconian line, the Emperor Henry the Third. None of its rulers had shown a nobler temper or a greater capacity for action. In seven years Bohemia was quieted, Hungary conquered, and public peace established throughout Germany. But the projects of Henry were wider than those of a merely German king. He crossed the Alps to put himself at the head of a movement for the reform of the Church. A new religious enthusiasm was awakening throughout Europe, an enthusiasm which showed itself in the reform of monasticism, in a passion for pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and in the foundation of religious houses. We have seen how energetically this movement was working in Normandy; it was the coldness, if not the antagonism, that the house of Godwine showed to it which was the special weakness of their policy in England. Godwine himself founded no religious house; he was charged by his enemies with plundering many. His son Swein outraged the religious sentiment of the day by his abduction of an abbess. But if it was repulsed by the house of Godwine, the revival found friends elsewhere. Leofric of Mercia was renowned for his piety and his bounty to religious houses. Eadward himself

was saintly in his devotion. In England however, as abroad, the first vigour of the revival spent itself on the crying scandal of the day, the feudalization of the Church by grants or purchase of its highest offices as fiefs of lord or king, and by their transmission like lay estates from father to son.

The Empire and the Papacy.

It was against this abuse that Henry specially directed his action. In the theory of the Empire a spiritual head was as needful for Christendom as a secular head; Emperor and Pope were alike God's vice-gerents in His government of the world. But the Papacy was now on the verge of a more complete feudalization than the meaner prelacies of the Western Church. Three claimants now disputed the chair of St. Peter; of these, two had been raised to it by the Roman barons, one by bribery of the Roman people. Their deposition, the elevation of a German Pope, edicts against the purchase of ecclesiastical offices, showed Henry's zeal in the purification of the Church. It was shown still more grandly when the bishop whom he had called to the Papacy as Leo IX. renounced at a warning from the deacon Hildebrand the papal ornaments to which he had no title but the nomination of the Emperor, and only resumed them after a formal election by the clergy of Rome. Henry owned the justness of the principle, and Leo became his coadjutor in the settlement of Christendom. From the reforms of Henry the Third dates that revival of the Papacy which was soon to deal a fatal blow at the Empire itself. Hildebrand, the future Gregory the Seventh, was in Leo's train as he returned over the Alps, and continued to mould the

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

policy of the Papacy in accordance with his own high conception of the commission of Christ's Church on earth. But for the moment the ecclesiastical reforms of the Emperor were interrupted by the troubles of the Empire itself. Henry's greatness stirred the jealousy of his feudatories; and though his wonderful activity held the bulk of his realm in peace he was met in Lower Lorraine, the Low Countries of later history, by a rebellion under its duke.

Normandy and Flanders.

In this rising Duke Godfrey was backed by two powerful neighbours, the count of Holland and the count of Flanders. It was probably in the spring of 1049, at the moment when Baldwin of Lille announced by daring outrages his defiance of the Emperor, that a demand for his daughter's hand reached him from the court of Rouen. In itself the demand was natural enough. William had been pressed by his baronage to take a wife; and kinship alone might have drawn the duke to take her from the house of Flanders. It was no long time since Baldwin the Bearded, the present Count Baldwin's father, had married in his old age a daughter of Richard the Good, a cousin of William as of the English Eadward, and her presence at the court of Bruges would aid in the promotion of further alliances. But we can hardly doubt that political interest had more weight with William than the thought of kinship. A marriage with Matilda of Flanders would strengthen his hold on France, whose growing jealousy formed one of his greatest difficulties. Matilda's mother, Adela, was a sister of King Henry; and the connexion between the courts

of Paris and Bruges was of the closest kind. Even in a war with France the friendship of Flanders would cover the weakest side of the Norman frontier. But it is likely enough that England already occupied as large a part in William's plans as France. We can hardly doubt from his visit but two years later that dreams of an English crown were already stirring within him. And in any projects upon England it was of the highest import to secure the friendship of Flanders.

England and Flanders.

It was the more important that Baldwin's friendship seemed already to have been won by the great English house in which William must even now have discerned the main obstacle to his success. In seeking the alliance of the count of Flanders, Godwine was only following the traditional policy of the English kings. A common dread of the northmen had long held the two countries in close political connexion; and the marriage of a former Count Baldwin with Ælfthryth[1] the daughter of Ælfred, was part of a system of alliances by which Eadward the Elder and Æthelstan strove to bridle Normandy in its earlier days. Even when that dread of the northmen died away, a friendly intercourse went on between the two countries. It was at Count Arnulf's court that Dunstan sought refuge in his exile; and one of the archbishop's biographies is due to a Flemish scholar. Commerce too linked England with "Baldwin's land," as Flanders was generally styled. Bruges formed the great mart for the countries of the Lower Rhine; and the merchants of Bruges were seen commonly enough in

[1] See p. 183.

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1052.

the streets of London. Flemings indeed were among the strangers whose encouragement was laid as a fault to Eadgar's charge. In the later days of Æthelred the political relations between the two countries became of a less friendly kind. It was from a Flemish harbour that Cnut steered to English shores, and it was at Bruges that Emma and Harthacnut planned their invasion of England. But aid to Harthacnut and Emma was less offensive to Eadward than it would have been to Harald Harefoot, and even the reception of some Danish pirates in the Scheldt, with English booty on board, was hardly of weight enough to prevent the renewal of the old English friendship during the Confessor's reign.

The policy of William.

The friendship was at this time drawn closer by the relations between Baldwin and the real ruler of England. A formal alliance by which Godwine and the count were bound to each other was of old standing; and it had been sedulously strengthened on the earl's part by repeated gifts. The terms on which the two houses stood had indeed been shown only a year before by the reception which Swein found at Baldwin's court. To break the connexion between the house of Godwine and the Flemish court, at any rate to neutralize its force, was of the first importance therefore for any success in after attempts upon England. The march of a Flemish army on Rouen, the appearance of a Flemish squadron off the Seine, would alike be fatal to any passage of the Channel by a Norman force. The friendship of Baldwin, on the other hand, would complete the schemes which William was already devising for securing the whole

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

range of the coast from Brittany to the Scheldt. Count Ingelram of Ponthieu was the husband of the duke's sister. Eustace of Boulogne was linked to him by his marriage with King Eadward's sister, Godgifu or Goda, who had been reared like Eadward himself at the Norman court. With the hand of Matilda therefore the whole coast of the Channel would be secured. The advantages of the match indeed were to be far greater than any which William could now have counted on; it was the friendship of Flanders which in the end alone made the Norman Conquest possible. But even now it was too marked a step to escape the watchful eye of such a statesman as Godwine; and we shall hardly do justice to his ability if we fail to trace his hand in the sudden and unlooked-for combination by which the Norman scheme was for a while rendered impossible.

Council of Rheims.

While William was seeking Matilda's hand at the court of Bruges, the new Pope, Leo the Ninth, and the Emperor Henry had together taken in hand their work of reform. Only twice before had the western world seen, never again was it destined to see, Pope and Cæsar united in the common rule of Christendom, united in the work of temporal peace and of religious reformation. The aim of the council which was summoned to meet them at Rheims was to restore at once the tranquillity of the Empire and the discipline of the Church. The first was indeed in great part secured. Leo had already launched his excommunication at the rebel princes, and though Baldwin of Flanders still remained defiant, the Lotharingian duke Godfrey laid down his arms and

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

submitted to penance for his sin. To bring spiritual peace to the Church needed longer toil. But England now seemed disposed to join in the task with Pope and Emperor. Bishop Duduc of Wells with two abbots appeared among the crowd of German and Burgundian bishops who answered Leo's summons to Rheims. The envoy was skilfully chosen. Duduc was himself a German, a Saxon or Lotharingian in blood, fitted therefore by his extraction to deal with a German Pope and a German Emperor. His commission simply bade him bring back word to the king what was done for Christendom, but it is hard to watch the acts of the council without suspecting that behind this spiritual mission lay a political one.

Its political results.

The work of moral reform went hand in hand at Rheims with that of ecclesiastical reformation. Princes as well as bishops found themselves summoned to the bar of Christendom. But it is remarkable that in the front rank of these offenders we find the four rulers whom William's policy was drawing together along the Channel coast; and that in each case the crime laid to their charge was the same. Marriage contracted within the bounds of spiritual relationship was counted by the Church as incest; and so wide were these bounds, so numerous the modes in which this relationship could be contracted, that few offences were more difficult to evade. Incest was the ground on which Eustace of Boulogne and Ingelram of Ponthieu were alike excommunicated; but we are not told whether their Norman marriages were the ground of the condemnation. The projected marriage of Matilda was the crime which brought

both William and Baldwin within the censure of the Church. Her mother Adela had been betrothed to William's uncle, the third Duke Richard of Normandy, before her marriage with Baldwin; and such a betrothal created a spiritual affinity between the countess and the ducal house which may have served as the ground for the prohibition. But whatever was the obstacle, the marriage was counted incestuous, and William and Baldwin were alike forbidden to proceed with it on pain of excommunication.

Failure of William's schemes.

How far these acts of the council sprang from Duduc's prompting it is hard to say, but some light is thrown on the part which England was playing by the events which followed the close of the assembly. Its prohibition of the marriage was in any case a heavy blow to the Norman duke. But William showed no sign of submitting to the prohibition. Strict Churchman as he was, we shall see him clinging stubbornly to this project for years to come, and marrying Matilda in the end in defiance of the excommunication. Nor did the count of Flanders seem more likely to yield. In spite of Leo's thunders and the withdrawal of Duke Godfrey, Baldwin remained in arms. The emperor was forced to march against him; but Flanders required a fleet as well as an army for its reduction, and Henry called on England for naval aid. No request could have jarred more roughly against the traditional English relations with the Flemish counts, nor with the previous policy of Godwine himself; but the aid which Henry needed was at once granted, and the emperor no sooner marched on Baldwin's frontier than English ships

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

gathered under the king himself at Sandwich for a cruise off the coast of Flanders. Attacked by two such powers at once even Baldwin's heart failed him: and the count bowed without a struggle to the imperial demands. We can hardly doubt from the part which Henry had taken in the council at Rheims, that among these was that of submission to the decree which prohibited Matilda's marriage with William. It is at any rate certain that so long as Henry lived Baldwin withheld his daughter's hand from the Norman duke.

Godwine's alliance with Flanders.

Whether this decisive aid of England had been stipulated as the price of the council's intervention between the duke and the Flemish count it is impossible now to tell. But the result of both served Godwine's purpose too well to allow of a belief that he was strange to the real import of the policy he directed. At the close of 1049 the Flemish match seemed to be at an end. Baldwin however was no sooner severed from William, than Godwine hastened to renew the friendly relations which his policy had for the moment interrupted. His aim was precisely that of the Norman duke. Like William, the earl resolved to bind Flanders to his interests by a marriage tie. But where the duke failed Godwine succeeded. How Baldwin was won, whether the match with Godwine's house was a condition of the withdrawal of the English fleet, we do not know, but the reconciliation was a rapid one. In little more than a year after the close of the war with Baldwin, Godwine's third son, Tostig, was wedded to Judith, the sister or daughter of the count of Flanders.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Outlawry of Swein.

No triumph could have been more complete than this diplomatic triumph of Godwine on foreign ground. He was now at the height of his power; the king of England was his son-in-law, Swein the king of Denmark was his nephew, and the count of Flanders was closely linked to his house. But in the very moment of his success new difficulties met him at home. While Eadward still lay at Sandwich the exiled Swein returned to seek pardon and restoration to the lands he had lost. Harold and Beorn, to whom these lands had been granted, for a time withstood his demand; but at a subsequent conference at Pevensey with Godwine and his cousin, Beorn was brought to consent, and he rode with Swein to serve as his mediator with the king. Again however the brutal nature of Godwine's eldest son broke out in crime. Beorn was treacherously seized, carried on shipboard, and murdered. The outrage roused the wrath of all. Swein was formally branded as "nithing," as utterly worthless, and was forsaken by the bulk of his own followers. The men of Hastings chased the two ships which still clung to him, captured them, and slew their crews. But Swein escaped to Baldwin's land, where the war which Flanders was waging with England and the emperor at that moment secured him a refuge. He was soon to return. As the winter passed and peace between Flanders and England was again restored, Bishop Ealdred of Worcester, who had been raised to his see two years before in the very height of Godwine's power, appeared at the court of Bruges. Ealdred was an adroit negotiator, and he may possibly

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

have been commissioned to bring about that new union of the count and earl which found its issue soon after in Tostig's marriage. He served at any rate another purpose of Godwine's. Early in 1050 he brought back Swein with him to England and made his peace with the king. The murderer's outlawry was reversed, and he was restored to his old rule over the shires of the west.

Godwine and the Primacy.

Such a restoration of such a criminal was an outrage to the general sense of justice which could hardly fail to weaken the cause of Godwine. But the earl's power remained unshaken; and ere the year ended the death of Archbishop Eadsige seemed about to raise it to a yet higher point. The vacancy of an English see, as of an English abbey, was at this time commonly filled by the direct nomination of the king in full Witenagemot; it was the king who "gave" the bishopric by formal writ and seal, who placed the bishop's staff in his hand, who sometimes personally enthroned him in his bishop's seat. But in some cases the royal nomination was preceded by an election on the part of the clergy or monks, with a petition to the king for its confirmation. On the death of Eadsige the latter course was followed. The Canterbury monks chose Ælfric, a kinsman of Godwine, for the vacant see; and Godwine supported with his whole power their prayer for his acceptance by Eadward. The choice of Ælfric was the last step in the steady process by which the earl was concentrating all power in the hands of his house. Already master of the state, the primacy of his kinsman made him master of the Church. The efforts of Eadward to provide a check on his influence

by the elevation of Norman bishops broke idly against the overwhelming supremacy of an archbishop of Godwine's blood. Nor was this all. The constitutional position of the primate was even more important than his ecclesiastical position. He alone could lawfully set the crown on the head of an elected king. He alone had the right of receiving from the people their assent to the king's rule, of receiving from the sovereign his oath to govern rightly. The choice of Ælfric pointed plainly to Godwine's designs on the crown.

Robert of Jumièges.

If even a shadow of kingship were to remain to him Eadward was forced to resist. He can hardly have needed the whispers of his Norman courtiers to disclose the significance of Ælfric's election, or the influence of Robert of Jumièges to estrange him, as Godwine's friends murmured that Robert did estrange him, from the earl. But once resolved on resistance the king acted with the violence of a weak man driven to stand at bay. The choice which he made was yet more anti-national than Godwine's own. If the primacy with its spiritual and political powers was no post for Godwine's kinsman, it was still less a post for a Norman stranger. But it was Robert of Jumièges whom the king named as archbishop in the Lenten Witenagemot of 1051. The new primate soon showed that his elevation was but the first blow in a strife which was from this moment assured. Spearhafoc, a partizan of Godwine, had been raised to the see of London as a means of counterbalancing the appointment to the primacy. Robert however hastened to Rome for his pallium and obtained from

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Pope Leo, probably on the usual plea of simony, a condemnation of Spearhafoc's choice. On the ground of this prohibition he refused on his return to consecrate the bishop, although he "came to him with the king's writ and seal." Spearhafoc, unhallowed as he was, defiantly took possession of his bishopric.

The Count of Boulogne.

As August wore away the quarrel grew more bitter. Godwine complained of the primate's intrigues against him; Robert complained of the earl's trespass on lands belonging to his see. A fresh cause of irritation was doubtless added by a visit of Eustace of Boulogne to the court at Gloucester. His coming was natural enough: he was wedded to the king's sister, and both he and his wife were endowed with wide estates in England. But it possibly had another end. The marriage of Tostig and Judith had just proclaimed to the world Godwine's triumph in Flanders; and Eustace, a near neighbour of Count Baldwin, a friend and ally of the Norman duke, was affected above all by this new turn in Flemish politics. But whether his visit was a result of this match or no, the sympathies of Count Eustace can hardly fail to have given fresh weight to the pressure which Robert was bringing to bear on the king against Godwine.

Outbreak of strife.

That the count of Boulogne was looked upon with hostility by Godwine's party, we see from the precaution which Eustace took of arming his men as he approached the earl's town of Dover on his return at the opening of September. His fears of a conflict were soon realized. One of his soldiers while roughly seeking lodgings wounded a burgher who refused them; the townsmen attacked the count; and after

the fall of some twenty men on either side Eustace was driven from Dover and fled almost alone to Eadward. The king summoned Godwine in wrath from Tostig's marriage-feast, and bade him as earl of Wessex avenge the wrong done to his brother-in-law. With his usual skill Godwine seized on the opportunity which the demand gave him. A contest was plainly at hand between Eadward and the earl; but the fight at Dover enabled him at once to take ground, not as an enemy of the king, but as an enemy of the foreigners who surrounded the king. He refused to attack his own people on a stranger's behalf; and with his sons, Swein and Harold, summoned the men of their three earldoms to follow him in arms. Fighting in fact at once broke out between Swein's men and the men of Earl Ralf in Herefordshire. For the moment the bold stroke promised to be successful. Eadward lay defenceless in the midst of Swein's earldom. The followers of the three earls immediately gathered at their call a few miles off Gloucester, in a force so "great and countless" as to show what careful preparation the house of Godwine had made beforehand for the blow. From his camp on the Cotswolds the earl demanded the surrender into his hands of Eustace and the Normans in Ralf's castle. But quick as had been Godwine's stroke, others were as quick as he. The earls of Mercia and Northumberland were doubtless on their way to the usual autumnal meeting of the Witan; but on the summons of the panic-struck king they called up the whole strength of their earldoms, and hurried with the smaller force about them to Gloucester.

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035.
1053.

Failure of Godwine's plans.

The approach of Leofric and Siward, with the men whom Ralf brought up from Herefordshire, changed the whole face of affairs. The surrender of Count Eustace was at once refused, and as the Mercians and Northumbrians gathered round Eadward they clamoured to be led against Godwine and his sons. Dexterous as the earl's policy had been, it had utterly broken down. His aim had been to stand before England as the foe of strangers and not of the king. But the sudden rescue wrought by Siward and Leofric forced him, "loath" as he was, to stand boldly out in arms against Eadward himself; and it marks the power which the monarchy had now gained over the national sentiment, in great measure from Godwine's own policy and action, that the moment this attitude was fairly taken the earl's strength fell from him. But with the sentiment of loyalty was rising also the consciousness of national unity. The day had passed when Mercian or Northumbrian could shed West-Saxon blood as the blood of strangers. The wiser folk on both sides deemed it "unræd" or wisdom-lacking to join battle; "seeing that there was most that noblest was in England in the two hosts."

His flight.

Not less striking than the force of either sentiment was the new consciousness of national law. The great dispute was left to the judgement of the Witenagemot which was summoned on the twenty-first of September, so fast had events marched, at London. The two hosts were parted by the river; Godwine and his sons lay at Southwark; Eadward and the Mercian and Northumbrian earls encamped on the northern shore. The Witan no sooner met than they gave an

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

earnest of their coming judgement by the outlawry of Swein. The reversal of Godwine's worst deed showed what had most shaken his power over Englishmen; but Godwine still clung to his son. Outlaw as he now was, he kept Swein beside him. The earl trusted to the political skill which had rescued him from so many dangers, and Bishop Stigand of Winchester, one of his stoutest partizans, negotiated busily with the king. But while Stigand crossed and recrossed the river Godwine's host melted away; and a final summons to appear before the Witan drove him from Southwark. A sentence of outlawry on the part of the Witan and the host followed him in his flight over sea.

Its results.

The triumph of the king and of the primate was complete. Godwine with three of his sons, Swein, Tostig, and Gyrth, made their way to Baldwin's court. Two others, Harold and Leofwine, struck westward to Bristol and sailed thence to Dublin, where a native king, Dermot, was now lord alike of Irish and Danes. It is plain that the policy of the house of Godwine, closely linked as it was with the northmen through Gytha and her kindred, had secured a hold on these western seas by an alliance with the Danish Ostmen, as it secured a hold on the eastern channel through its alliance with Baldwin. The orders given to Bishop Ealdred of Worcester to seize Harold as he fled mark the importance which the new government attached to this danger in the West; but his pursuers "might not or would not" overtake him. The cautious phrase of the chronicler shows that, if Swein's inlawing and Godwine's daring stroke for supremacy in the

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

realm had brought about a national resistance, there was no bitter hostility against his house. The earl's flight, indeed, seems to have been unexpected; it is likely that many in the host at Westminster meant simply to back the king in his appeal against Godwine's last demands; and the sudden disappearance of the great minister who had so long stood at the head of English affairs struck a panic into men's hearts. Murmurs passed from lip to lip that the land was lost now the land's father was gone. We see the power of this sentiment in the moderation of the acts which followed Eadward's triumph. Godwine's daughter, indeed, the king's wife Eadgyth, was put away and sent to a monastery. The earldom of Swein was broken up, and while part of it fell to the king's nephew Ralf, a part of it, along with the western portion of Wessex, was placed under the rule of another kinsman of Eadward's, Odda. The East-Anglian earldom of Harold was given to Leofric's son Ælfgar. Spearhafoc was driven from the see he claimed, and one of the king's Norman chaplains, William, was raised to the bishopric of London. But we hear of no further reactionary measures; nor is there any sign that, powerful as he now was, the Norman primate used his power to make England Norman. Neither Siward nor Leofric, indeed, were men to suffer their success to be turned to merely Norman uses; and his conduct in this hour of independence shows that Eadward had till now favoured the Norman group around him simply as a counterpoise to the oppression of Godwine.

But in one breast the fall of the house of Godwine

must have raised hopes which, baffled as they were to be again and again, were never thenceforth to die. In the triumph of the earl's policy in Flanders William of Normandy had suffered the great defeat of his life. The marriage he had striven to bring about was denied him, while the marriage with Tostig bound Baldwin more firmly than ever to Godwine's house. But the fall of the earl opened chances of success in the aims which, we can hardly doubt, were now growing clearer before him. In the following Eastertide, 1051, "came Earl William from beyond sea with great following of Frenchmen; and the king welcomed him and so many of his fellows as seemed him good, and let him go again." There is something startling in the simple words which record the first landing of William on English shores. Of the import of his coming we are told nothing by the English chronicler. But the Norman knights of the duke's train brought back tales to their own land of a fresh promise made to William by his royal kinsman that he would bequeath him his crown; and, true it is, the tale deepened the conviction of every Norman that England was soon to be his own.[1]

William visits England.

But Godwine was watching the turn of English feeling with other eyes than those of William. News of the popular panic at his flight must soon have

The plans of Godwine.

[1] Note the growth of the Norman convention from its beginning (1) with Eadward's accession and the rumoured promise of succession; (2) its progress with Primate Robert's visit to Rouen and promise; (3) and with William's visit to Eadward and promise. The very number of the promises throws grave doubt on the truth of any, but it shows the growing belief in the Norman pretensions.

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

reached him over sea; nor can we doubt that the great treasure which he carried to Flanders was lavished to support the sympathy felt for him in his exile, and to spur Baldwin to the efforts which we find the count making to induce Eadward to receive him again. But for months all was in vain. Winter and spring wore away, and still the king was stubborn in his refusal of pardon. At last Godwine girded himself to win his return by force. His first step was to free himself from the miserable son who had cost him so much. Brutal as Swein was, there is something pitiful in the tenacious affection with which Godwine had clung to him in spite of his crimes; but the earl saw at last that whatever welcome England might have for himself, it had no welcome for Swein. And his departure on a pilgrimage, in which he found his grave, removed the one great obstacle to Godwine's reconciliation with his country. Already friends were stealing over sea to Bruges, "happy to be exiles in his exile,"[1] while messages came from other friends who remained but called for his return, and pledged themselves to live and die with him.[2] Through the spring of 1052, Godwine was busy equipping a fleet in the Yser, while Harold gathered ships at Dublin, and when midsummer came all was ready. Eadward was still resolute against the earl; his

[1] Vita Edw. (ed. Luard), 404.

[2] "And during the time that he was here in the land, he enticed to him all the men of Kent, and all the butsecarls from Hastings and everywhere there by the sea-coast, and all the east end, and Sussex, and Surrey, and much else in addition thereto. Then all declared that they would live and die with him." Eng. Chron. (Peterborough), a. 1052.

own prayers and the embassies both of Baldwin and the French king, whose interposition again throws light on the wide reach of Godwine's political connexions, alike failed to move him; and a fleet and land force was gathered at Sandwich to meet his coming.

Return of Godwin.

The earl had already started, but his first attempt ended in utter failure, for he was driven back to Bruges by a storm, and for a month all seemed at an end. But the failure had given a false security to Eadward. At the beginning of September the king's fleet withdrew to London to refit, and at the moment when the coast lay open Eadward learnt that Harold had left Dublin to join his father. The young earl turned into the Bristol Channel to make a descent on Porlock, and while the brutal ravages of his Danish shipmen woke the king's dread of an attack from the West, Harold's own ships rounded the Land's-End and entered the Channel. Godwine and his son met off the Isle of Wight, sailed eastward along the coast, and entered the Thames. The country rose as they advanced. Vessels put off from every little port they touched, manned by seamen who vowed to live and die with Godwine; and when the earl's fleet moored before London it far outnumbered the fifty vessels of the king. Eadward, however, was hardly less active and resolute than his foes, and a large force lay marshalled along the northern bank of the Thames. But Godwine was too consummate a statesman to derive success from mere force of arms. He stilled the wild outcry for battle which burst from his men, as the king delayed to give answer to the prayer of

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

the earl for restoration to land and goods. Bloodshed would only part him irretrievably from the men with whom he fought; it would part him yet more irretrievably from the king. He anticipated the constitutional distinctions of later times in representing his enterprize as simply directed against evil counsellors. He protested his loyalty to the sovereign who had humbled and outlawed him, and who had outraged his honour in driving his daughter from his bed. "He would rather die," he said, "than suffer aught to be done against his lord the king."

His restoration.

He knew, indeed, that a combat was needless. London was on his side. Negotiations had been going on long before his coming with its burghers; and now that his fleet appeared before it the Londoners declared for the earl. The blow was decisive. Eadward's own soldiers swore that they would not fight with men of their own kin, that they would not have the land given over to "outlandish men," to perish through the strife of its own children. But Eadward's counsellors had not waited for this mutiny of the host. The Norman nobles at once rode off westward to Earl Ralf's country. The Norman primate, with the Norman bishop of Dorchester, mounted and rode through London to the sea, their train cutting their way with difficulty through a crowd of young burghers, who would have held or slain them. Deserted and alone in the great Witenagemot which met on the morrow, the king was forced to accept Godwine's purgation from the charges brought against him, and to restore him and his house to all they had lost. His sons regained their earldoms; his daughter

was brought back to the king's house. "And there outlawed they all Frenchmen that aforetime made unlaw, deemed ill-doom, and red unrede in the land."

Change in his position.

When the hosts which had gathered on either side the Thames streamed back to their homes, the triumph of Godwine seemed complete. The king had been forced to give him the kiss of peace. His Norman rivals were in flight over sea. His old possessions were restored. The influence which had rested before on his own supreme ability, on long experience and possession of authority, on the gradual accumulation of lands and honours, on the annexation of province after province by his house, rested now on the basis of a national acceptance, of a recall and a restoration which the solemn decision of the Witenagemot approved as national acts. But the earl's keen eye could hardly fail to see that the revolution of 1051 had given a mighty shock to his power; even his restoration, triumphant as it was, failed to give back to his house its old supremacy. If Eadward had been beaten in his effort to ruin Godwine, he had shown what strength remained to the crown. If the two rival earls preferred Godwine to a Norman rule they were far from purposing to sink back into their old inferiority. The settlement which followed the earl's return throws light on the long negotiations which Bishop Stigand conducted with the Witan before the vote of Godwine's outlawry was recalled, and leaves little doubt that the fresh arrangement was one of mutual concession.

Godwine and Eadward.

The dignity of the crown was jealously preserved. In the very hour of his triumph Godwine strove

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

to soften as far as he might Eadward's humiliation. At the first sight of the king he flung down his arms and threw himself at Eadward's feet praying for the king's peace. It was only when Eadward yielded to his prayer and the prayer of the Witan that the earl took back his arms again from the king's hand and accompanied him into the palace. Even the change of the king's advisers remained a partial one. If Eadward was forced to abandon his Norman archbishop and the Norman advisers of Godwine's exile, a Norman court was still left to him. He remained surrounded by Norman stallers and chaplains, his writs were drawn by a Norman chancellor. Though the two kinsmen of the king had played a foremost part in the earl's overthrow they were left uninjured. French as he was, Ralf retained his earldom of the Magesætas. Odda, if he lost the earldom built up for him out of the western shires of Wessex, seems to have been compensated by the creation of an earldom of the Hwiccas out of the shires of Gloucester and Worcester.

Godwine and the Earls.

The same signs of compromise appeared in the new relations of Godwine with the rival earls. The house of Leofric had profited most by his fall. Whatever had been the steps of its growth, the Mercian earldom which had once been reduced to little more than three shires, Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Shropshire, now reached again eastward over Lincoln and stretched westward to Oxford and the Thames; and as if to build up again the old realm of Mid-Britain, Leofric's son Ælfgar had received at Eadward's hand Harold's earldom of

East-Anglia. Siward, master of Northumbria from the Tweed to the Trent, for Nottinghamshire now passed into the Northumbrian earldom, was rewarded for his share in Godwine's overthrow by a part of the counties of Northampton and Huntingdon, a gift which served the political purpose of providing a barrier between the possessions of Leofric and his son. Such a division of England raised Leofric and Siward to a new equality with Godwine: but his submission to it was probably a part of the terms of his recall. Wessex returned to Godwine as of old; East-Anglia was also restored; but Leofric and Siward retained the possessions they had won.

Godwine and the Church.

In the settlement of Church matters there was a like spirit of compromise. Spearhafoc, the claimant whom Godwine had backed in his occupation of the see of London, disappeared; and the Norman bishop, William, returned as soon as the storm was over to his see. We hear nothing of Ælfric, the kinsman whom the earl had striven to raise to the primacy; but the question of the appointment to the see of Canterbury was too important a one for Godwine to yield. In the tumult which broke out when Eadward was forced to receive the earl back again, Archbishop Robert of Canterbury fled from London and crossed the Channel. His life indeed was in danger; his knights had been forced to cut their way out of London; and a formal outlawry in the Witenagemot, on the ground that he and his Frenchmen had been foremost in making strife between Godwine and the king, followed him over sea. But Godwine was far from resting content with Robert's flight. The elevation of the Norman to

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

the primacy had been the crowning defeat of that policy by which he was concentrating all power in State or Church in the hands of his house. And now that his power had returned, he fell back on his older plan. There had been recent instances of the deprivation of bishops by a sentence of the Witan: and though we have no record of such a step, we may gather that Robert was himself deprived of his see. It was given to Bishop Stigand of Winchester, whose action in the late contest marked him as an ardent partizan of the house of Godwine. Robert at once hastened to Rome to appeal against the intrusion of Stigand into his see. It was plain that the strife between the rival primates must widen into a strife between England and the papacy. No canonical power could be alleged for Robert's removal: and to churchmen generally the elevation of Stigand could seem nothing but a defiance of all ecclesiastical law. In Normandy sympathy for the exiled archbishop was naturally even keener. The memory of the slaughter of Normans by Englishmen at the seizure of Ælfred was quickened by tales of the slaughter of Normans on Godwine's return. The driving out of the Norman prelates, the outlawry of the Norman courtiers, were taken as outrages to the Norman name, and the elevation of Stigand remained as the most galling sign of Godwine's triumph.

Character of Godwine.

This triumph however was the last which Godwine was to win. His long administration was fast drawing to its close, and the sickness which was soon to end his life seems to have fallen on him immediately after his restoration. But alike in his overthrow and

his success he had shown the qualities which had so long placed him at the head of the State. It is in the transitional moments of a nation's history that it needs the cool prudence, the sensitive selfishness, the quick perception of what is possible, which distinguished the adroit politician whom the death of Cnut had left supreme in England. Living in a time of transition he was himself a fit representative of his time; his birth disputed, his connexions Danish, his policy English, a skilled warrior, but statesman rather than warrior, and administrator rather than conqueror. Beginning as a royal favourite, he died the "land-father" of the English people; from the court dependent he passed insensibly into the patient statesman; on the one side he appeared a grasping noble, on the other a wise ruler. The first great lay statesman of English history, he owed his elevation neither to hereditary rank nor to ecclesiastical position, but to sheer ability; the first minister who over-awed the crown, his pliability, his good temper, his quick insight, his caution, and his patience, showed that he possessed the qualities of the adroit courtier. Shrewd, eloquent, an active administrator, Godwine united vigilance, industry, and caution, with a singular dexterity in the management of men. In the range of politics indeed he was unfettered by scruples. His deadness to the religious sentiment of his day was shown by the way in which he held aloof from the ecclesiastical and monastic revival of the time, and by his support of Stigand, unworthy as he was, from political motives. His indifference to the moral judgements of the men

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

about him found expression in whatever share he may have had in the murder of Ælfred, and in his steady adherence to the son whose crimes had openly outraged public feeling. His far-reaching ambition and keen selfishness were seen in the aggrandizement of his house, and in the vast wealth at his command, as well as in his dexterous use of it. But in spite of this absence of moral sympathy, his fertility of conception, the range of his designs, the quietness of his strokes, his dogged perseverance, and his coolness and self-command in success, added to his long administrative experience, left him without a rival in the conduct of government. His policy both abroad and at home marked the daring and originality of his genius. In foreign affairs he was the first among English statesmen whose diplomacy and international policy had a European breadth, and concerned itself alike with Scandinavia, the Empire, the Papacy, France, Flanders, and the Irish Ostmen. At home his government was one of peace, for warrior as he had been in his youth, he was absolutely without military ambition, and sought only political success. It was nevertheless in this field of home politics that the transitional character of his genius most truly asserted itself. Holding down feudalism, yet himself aiming at a great feudal revolution, building up in the council-chamber the power of the crown, yet himself turning the king into a puppet, he was the creator of a wholly new policy. He was the first to develope in the people at large a common interest in the English nation, an interest stronger even than the instinct of allegiance to the house

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

of Cerdic; and the new "loyalty" which was thus his creation strengthened the authority of the crown, even while it superseded the king. The true work of Godwine lay in the building up of the English people, the awakening of a new loathing of foreigners and of a new sense of kinship, and the gathering of the nation into that brotherhood which looked to him as the "land-father."

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Notes.

(*The following notes on the Growth of the Royal Administration have been drawn up from some fragmentary papers, very rough and imperfect, and wholly unrevised.*)

In the history of the royal administration three stages are distinctly marked, each of which indicates a fresh step in the progress of the kingly rule. In the time of Ælfred the great officers of the court were the four heads of the royal household, the Hordere, the Staller, the Dish-thegn, and the Cup-thegn. Under Æthelred the appointment of the High-reeve shows the first effort of the crown to create a minister of state. Finally, in the reign of Cnut we may trace the beginnings of that administrative body which was to become so important under the Confessor, the Clerks of the Chapel, or the "King's Chaplains."

The four officers of the early West-Saxon court are at least as old as Ælfred, and, whether borrowed or not in their actual form from the Frankish court, sprang naturally from the needs of the king's household for its inner regulation and finance, for its movements through the country, and for its commissariat. The Hordere was the officer of the court in its stationary aspect, as the Staller or Constable was of the court on progress; while the hardly less important functions of the commissariat of this moving army were shared between the Steward and the Butler.

But of the four officers one only retained under the later West-Saxon monarchy any real power. The dish-thegn and cup-thegn lost importance as the court became stationary and no longer maintained a vast body of royal followers. The staller retained only the functions of leading in war as the feudal constable, which in turn passed away with later changes in the military system. The hordere alone held a position of growing importance.

The búr-thegn, camerarius cubicularius; the hrægel-thegn, or keeper of the wardrobe; the dispensator, thesaurarius, hordere,

are all grouped by Kemble ("Sax. in Eng." ii. 106) as names for the same great officer. The first instances given by him are Ælfric thesaurarius, under Ælfred, Æthelsige camerarius, under Eadgar, and Leofric hrægel-thegn, under Æthelred. No doubt the "Hoard" contained not only money and coin, but the costly ornaments and robes of the crown. Of all the officers of the court he was far the most important, (1) as head of the whole royal service; (2) as exercizing control over the royal palace or household wherever it might be, and charged with care, "de honestate palatii seu specialiter ornamento regali:" (3) as receiver of royal dues for the crown-lands, and head of the royal gerefan, ("we may presume that he had the general management of the royal property, as well as the immediate regulation of the household. In this capacity he may have been the recognized chief of the cyninges tungerefan, or king's bailiffs, on the several estates; for we find no traces of any districtual or missatic authority to whom these officers could account," Kemble, "Saxons in Eng." ii. 106); (4) as "dispensator" of the crown; and (5) through this, and in his charge "de donis annuis militum," as head of the household troops; and (6) of the budding diplomatic service through his care "de donis diversarum legationum" (Hincmar 22, ap. Kemble, "Sax. in Eng." ii. 106). If under the changing conditions of the West-Saxon monarchy the importance of the Hordere in some of these offices declined, if his control over the household became less important, and his headship of the royal troops passed into other hands, and his charge of the royal demesnes practically ended with the commutation into money-rents of the dues derived from them, he found his importance as treasurer growing at every change in the system of finance, and in the organization of the exchequer in its judicial as well as fiscal developement.

A second stage in the progress of kingly rule was marked by the creation under Æthelred of the High-reeve, the first effort of the crown to create a minister of state, a deputy of its executive and judicial power beside the hereditary ealdormen, &c. Fiercely opposed, this institution became permanent under Cnut in the "vice-royalty" of Godwine; under the Confessor in that of Harold; and from it under the Norman kings sprang the Justiciar. With the consolidation of the royal administration, there went on no doubt a corresponding developement of the

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Notes.

royal justice in the shape of appeals to the king himself from subordinate jurisdictions; and the growing pressure of this may have been the cause, if not of the institution of the Secundarius under Cnut, at any rate of the continuance of this great officer under a king like the Confessor who needed no vice-gerent through absence from his realm, as it was certainly the cause of the change of his name under the Norman kings to that of Justiciar. It was thus the origin of the three great divisions of the "king's court" with their staff of officers, while its executive functions passed to the offspring of the third body of ministers whose origin dates from the foreign kings of England, the clerks of the royal chapel.

The Royal Chapel marks the third stage in ministerial organization. The high-reeve indeed early turned into a power which overawed the crown, and the rapid extension of the sphere of the "capellani" may mark a side of the struggle for the independence of the crown. The king's chaplains are first seen as a body under Cnut, but rapidly mount into power under the Confessor, when the "king's writ," issued through them, begins to be the efficient organ of the royal will throughout the realm. From their head, the chancellor, comes our equitable court of justice, from the rest our secretaryships of state, with the whole fabric of modern administration. The system had its origin in lands whose circumstances differed from those of England. In Frankish and other Continental courts, where the customary Teutonic law had to be worked side by side with a Roman written law, the Roman clerk (apocrisiarius, referendarius, cancellarius) was needed to decide whether orders were accordant to law or not (Kemble, "Sax. in Eng." ii. 114), or conflicted with the written jurisprudence, and to affix or withhold the royal signet accordingly. No such need, however, existed in England, and the presence of the royal chaplains, with their head the chancellor, may be best accounted for by administrative reasons; indeed, their institution coincides with the new class of royal writs which came in from the early years of Cnut's reign, issued by the king's personal authority without any confirmation by the Witan. In the first appearance of the chancery under Cnut we see traces of a Lotharingian organization, in the persons of foreign chaplains whose presence was probably due to their foreign training, and to the experience they may have brought of the Imperial

chancery. Eadsige (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 193, on his elevation to the archbishopric under Harald) the later archbishop of Canterbury, and Stigand the priest of Assandun (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 199; he was chaplain to Harald), who were among the chaplains, were indeed Englishmen. Wythmann, however, to whom Cnut in his early days gave the abbacy of Ramsey, was "Teutonicus natione" (Hist. Rames., Gale, iii. 404). So Duduc ("De Lotharingiâ oriundus," Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 218; "natione Saxo," Hunter, "Eccl. Doc." p. 15) was at the close of Cnut's reign, in 1033, bishop of Wells, and in high favour with the king. The manors of Banwell and Congresbury were "possessiones quas hæreditario jure a rege ante episcopatum promeruerat" (Hunter, "Eccl. Doc." p. 15), and he seems in some way to have held the abbacy of Gloucester. He was probably therefore a "capellanus." Hermann, who was made bishop of the Wilsætas in the first years of the Confessor's reign, had probably been inherited by him from his Danish predecessors, and may have belonged to this early group of foreign chaplains. To the same group would belong Leofric who (if Florence is right) must have been Reginbold's predecessor ("Regis cancellario Leofrico Brytonico mox Cridiatunensis et Cornubiensis datus est præsulatus," Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 199). Now, Leofric was "apud Lotharingos altus et doctus" (Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontif." p. 201 (Hamilton). Cnut's alliance with Conrad may have had some influence in his choice of Lotharingian clerks. This alliance went on between Eadward and Henry; the intrigues and negotiations before the Council of Rheims may be connected with these Lotharingians entering the chapel.

Under the Confessor the Royal Chapel underwent marked changes alike in its organization and in its character. From 1045 we find a chancellor at the head of the clerks holding the royal seal which Eadward first brought into use in England; while the uniform tenour of the writs, and the replacing of the old English writing in the royal documents by the light French hand in use among foreign clerks, alike point to some new arrangement of the secretarial work, and more exact organization of the chancery on foreign models. From this moment also we meet with almost exclusively foreign names, and these no longer names of Lotharingians, but of Normans. The group of Lotharingians who had served under Cnut seems indeed to

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Notes.

have been wholly broken up. Duduc had even in Cnut's time been rewarded by the see of Wells; Hermann was in 1045 appointed by Eadward to the bishopric of the Wilsætas; and in the same year Leofric was made bishop of Devonshire and Cornwall. It is possible that the promotion of Hermann and Leofric was designed to clear the way for the French chancery that now took the place of the Lotharingian, the members of which must have been so closely connected with Godwine's policy since the days of Cnut; and that this new organization of the royal chapel, following so soon on the appointment of Robert of Jumièges to the see of London (in 1044), marks an important step in Eadward's opening struggle with the earl.

The earliest signatures given by Kemble ("Sax. in Eng." ii. 115) date from 1045, *i.e.* from the opening of the strife between the king and Godwine—a significant date. They are those of Hermann capellanus (Flor. Worc. a. 1045); Wulfwig cancellarius (Cod. Dip. 779); Reginboldus sigillarius (Cod. Dip. 810); Reginboldus cancellarius (Cod. Dip. 813, 824, 825, 891); with a staff of the same date, Ælfgeat notarius (Cod. Dip. 825), Petrus capellanus (ib. 813, 825), Baldwinus capellanus (ib. 813), Osbernus capellanus (ib. 825), Robertus capellanus (ib. 825). Then, in 1047, Florence gives Heca as chaplain, afterwards bishop of Selsey; and, in 1049, Florence also notes Ulf as chaplain, who became bishop of Dorchester in 1051; Cynesige as chaplain, afterwards archbishop of York; and William, 1051, bishop of London (for these Kemble gives no signatures). Two other names are from Florence: Godmann, chaplain in 1053, and Gisa in 1060. It may be that this organization of the chancery or chapel marks Eadward's first period; his struggle with Godwine, and the foreign names of the staff, would suggest this idea. Godwine's triumph may have given a temporary blow to this new administrative scheme, for Kemble notes two chaplains, Cynesige and William, as signing in 1051, but none after, save Gisa in 1060 (Kemble, "Sax. in Eng." ii. 116).

The charter in which Wulfwig figures as "regiæ dignitatis cancellarius" (Cod. Dip. 779) is noted by Mr. Freeman as "doubtful." He afterwards succeeded Ulf as bishop of Dorchester. The group therefore really begins with the Norman Reginbold. Reginbold "appears in Domesday (180*b*) by the description of

'Reinbaldus Canceler' as holding lands in Herefordshire T.R.E." . . . . After the Conquest "he still held lands in Berkshire (56*b*, 60, 63), Gloucestershire (166*b*), and Wiltshire (68*b*), if he is, as he doubtless is, the same as 'Reinbaldus de Cirencestre' and 'Renbaldus presbyter.' He was dean of Cirencester (Ellis, i. 398), and besides his lay fees he held several churches in Wiltshire (Dom. 65*b*)." (Freeman, "Norm. Conq." ii. 357, 358). The permanence of the new organization is shown by his remaining with his fellows after the restoration of 1052. Thus he signs the Waltham charter as "regis Cancellarius," with Peter and Baldwin as king's chaplains (Cod. Dip. 813). Of the notary Ælfgeat I find no other notice. Peter and Baldwin, as we see, remained in the chancery with Reginbold to the end of the reign, when Baldwin became abbot of S. Edmundsbury (Freeman, "Norm. Conq." ii. 586. "He had been a monk of S. Denis, a certain presumption, though not amounting to proof, of his French origin.") Before his abbacy of S. Eadmund's he had been prior of Earl Odda's church at Deerhurst. (See charter in Monast. iv. 665. On Abbot Leofstan's illness, King Eadward "Baldwinum, S. Dionysii monachum, ejus artis peritum, dirigendum curavit."—Will. Malm. "Gest. Pontif." (Hamilton), p. 156). Osbern's name indicates his Norman blood, but I know no more of him. Robert is of course the abbot of Jumièges, and probably the real mover in the whole matter. Promotion, indeed, to sees did not necessarily vacate the ministerial post, for Robert begins to sign as bishop of London in 1046 (Cod. Dip. 784), but this see would leave him free to assist in the chancery. Ulf too must have been added to it soon after 1045, for in 1049, when named to Dorchester, he is described as the king's "preoste" (Eng. Chron. (Ab.) 1049), and "regis capellanus" (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 203). William, too, who is named "chaplain of the king" (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 207), on his promotion to London in 1051, must have been introduced into the chancery after 1045, perhaps taking Robert's place on his rise to the primacy.

Gisa alone among these later chaplains was a Lotharingian; he was appointed bishop of Wells in 1060. His solitary figure cannot have materially changed the French aspect of the chancery throughout Eadward's reign. The fact that Walter, the Lotharingian who at the same time became bishop of Hereford,

CHAP. X.

The House of Godwine.

1035-1053.

Notes.

was Eadgyth's chaplain, may show that clerks were again being brought from this quarter, or simply be a part of the Lotharingian traditions of Godwine's house as shown by Adelhard and Harold.

[Dr. Stubbs has pointed out to me another foreign chaplain of Eadward's of whom we find mention elsewhere. "Helinandus, vir admodum pauperis domus et obscure progenitus, literaturâ pertenuis et persona satis exilis, cum per notitiam Gualteri comitis Pontisarensis, de cujus comitatu gerebat originem, ad gratiam Eadvardi Anglorum Regis pertigisset (uxor enim sua cum prædicto comite sibi necessitudinem nescio quam creârat), capellanus ejus fuit, et quia Francicam elegantiam nôrat, Anglicus ille ad Francorum Regem Henricum eum sæpius destinabat." (Guibertus de Novigento "De Vitâ suâ," lib. iii. c. 2, Opera, ed. D'Achery, p. 496). King Henry made him bishop of Laon (Ibid.) in 1052; he died in 1098 (Gallia Christiana, vol. ix. col. 524, 525). The second bishop of Laon after Helinandus had also been in the service of a king of England, but this must have been Henry I. (Guibertus "De Vitâ suâ," lib. iii. c. 4, ed. D'Achery, p. 299).—A. S. G.]

CHAPTER XI.

THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

1053—1071.

Difficulties of William.

In the revolution which restored Godwine to power nothing is more remarkable than the inaction of William the Norman. To the duke, we can hardly doubt, the sudden success of Godwine was a bitter disappointment. The overthrow of his hopes was complete. Whatever promises Eadward may have made to him, he could hardly look for their fulfilment save with the aid of the Normans at Eadward's court, and the Norman court-party had been broken up. The Norman archbishop was driven over sea, and the duke was not less likely than his people to resent the wrong done to the primate. The Norman knights who found a refuge with the Scot king soon fell beneath the axes of Siward's hus-carls. How bitter a sense of disappointment lingered in Norman hearts we know from the fire which the memory of these events kindled when, a few years later, William called Normandy to avenge them. Nor was the temper of the duke such as to brook easily disappointment. But wroth

as he might be, it was impossible to attack England with Flanders at her back. The overthrow of William's schemes for a Flemish marriage by Godwine's dexterous negotiations with Pope and Emperor still tied the duke's hands. From the moment of the council, whether Baldwin called on William to fulfil his pledge in vain or no, the courts of Bruges and of Rouen steered apart again. Baldwin fell back on his old alliance with the house of Godwine. The marriage of Judith with Tostig announced his change of policy, and promised to bind the earl and the count inseparably together. The fall of Godwine only brought out into clearer light the friendship of Flanders. It was in Flanders that the earl found refuge in his exile. It was from Bruges that his intrigues with his English supporters were carried on. His fleet was gathered in the Scheldt, and Flemish seamen were mingled with his own. William, with his own duchy still ill in hand and France watching jealously across his southern border, knew well that the estrangement of Baldwin barred any hope of attack over sea. Nor was this estrangement the least weighty of the dangers which threatened William at home, for the hostility of such a neighbour was sure to stir into life the smouldering discontent of the Norman baronage.

His marriage.

We see the duke's consciousness of this danger from the step on which he ventured with a view of dispelling it. While Robert of Jumièges was still pleading at the papal court, William, by an act as daring as Godwine's, placed himself in opposition to the Papacy and the moral sense of Christendom. If he now

claimed again the hand of Matilda it was with a full foresight of the difficulties in which such a marriage was to plunge him. The prohibition of Pope Leo was the most formidable of the obstacles in his way. But in 1053 Pope Leo was a prisoner in the hands of the Normans, who were founding a state in Southern Italy; and William seized the opportunity to wed Baldwin's daughter. But if Leo was a prisoner the Church was free, and the duke at once found himself face to face with the religious censure of the world about him. Rome laid the duchy under interdict. The archbishop of Rouen, his uncle Malger, threatened William with excommunication. His own counsellor, the prior of Bec, openly opposed the marriage. Lanfranc was now the foremost scholar of Western Christendom; and his disapproval was weightier than even the thunders of the Papacy. It stung William to the quick. In a wild burst of wrath he bade his men burn a manor-house of Bec to the ground and drive out Lanfranc from Norman land. In his haste to see his orders carried out the duke overtook the Italian hobbling on a lame horse towards the frontier. He angrily bade him hasten, and Lanfranc replied by a cool promise to go faster out of his land if he would give him a better steed. "You are the first criminal that ever asked gifts from his judge," retorted William; but a burst of laughter told that his wrath had passed away, and duke and prior drew quietly together again. Wise or unwise, Lanfranc saw that it was too late to withstand the Flemish match; and William knew well that no persuasion in Christendom could do so much to win over the

CHAP. XI.

The Norman Conquest.

1053. 1071.

Papacy to forgiveness as that of the prior of Bec. Lanfranc made his way to Rome and sought for a dispensation. But six years of tedious negotiation passed away and William remained unpardoned, while the censures of the Church woke into fresh life every element of hostility within and without his land. The old cry of bastardy was heard once more. The old claims of rival branches of the ducal house woke again to life. Revolts of his kinsmen, William of Eu and William of Arques, revealed the existence of a widespread plot among the Norman nobles; and these were hardly trodden out before France itself drew the sword.

Victory of Mortemer.

King Henry was still bent on the policy of balance which held one feudatory at bay by help of another. A few years back, when Geoffrey Martel threatened his crown, he had relieved himself of the pressure of the Angevin by alliance with the Norman duke. He now resolved to break the power of Normandy by an alliance with the Angevin. After fruitless aid to the Norman rebels the king himself took the field. One French army marched from Beauvais on Normandy to the right of the Seine; another under Henry himself advanced from Mantes on the duchy to the left of the river. The aid which came to the invader from Chartres and Aquitaine, from the men of Rheims and Laon, as from the burghers of Tours and Blois, shows how widely the greatness of William had revived the old hatred of the Normans. But the number of his assailants only heightened William's triumph. To meet the double attack the Norman forces were parted in two divisions,

William himself leading the southern army, which defended the country between the Seine and the Oise, while four of the barons headed a body which guarded the land between the Seine and the Bresle. It was the last which first encountered the invaders. The French army under Henry's brother, Odo, and Count Guy of Ponthieu, which penetrated into the country about Aumale, had taken up its quarters in the little town of Mortemer, when it was surprised by the Norman onset. The town was set on fire, the French were slain as they hurried from its streets, and the whole army forced back in utter rout across the border. At night the news reached William as he lay with his host fronting Henry on the Seine. The cool craft and grim humour which underlay his dauntless courage showed itself in the use he made of the victory. Ralf of Toesny was sent to climb a tree in the neighbourhood of the king's camp, and at dawn the Frenchmen heard him shouting the famous words which still live in the verse of Wace, "Up, Frenchmen, up; you sleep too long; go bury your brothers that lie dead at Mortemer!" Panic spread with the news through the invading army, and before the sun was high its tents were in a blaze, and Henry was hurrying in retreat towards Paris. He purchased the release of the French barons who lay in William's prisons by a peace which was concluded in 1055, and which left William free to deal with Geoffrey of Anjou. The capture of Count Guy in the battle of Mortemer had enabled William to exact an acknowledgement of his lordship over Ponthieu as the price of liberation; and a march from Domfront now won a like

acknowledgement from the lord of Mayenne. His submission carried William still further in the process of aggrandizement which was tearing the Maine country bit by bit from the grasp of Anjou.

Earl Harold.

While William was thus fighting against odds in his own land he was in no case to hinder the triumph of Godwine or Godwine's house in lands over sea. Godwine indeed was fated to reap little from the victory he had won. Soon after his return he began to sicken, and in April, 1053, he suddenly fell speechless at the king's board. With his death Harold became earl of the West-Saxons. The death of Godwine indeed strengthened the position of his house. It at once changed its whole relation to the king. Whatever stain of Ælfred's blood lay on Godwine, none lay on his sons. Eadward had no galling sense that he owed them his crown, or that he had failed in a struggle to break their power. The earl's children had grown up in the king's court; they were his wife's kinsmen, and they seem to have shared the awe of the king's saintliness which was becoming general about them. From this time therefore Eadward's antipathy died gradually away. The wife whom he had discarded a year before won his affection. Tostig became his almost inseparable companion in chase or palace. Harold, if less cherished than his brother, was still regarded with favour. He took his father's place as the king's counsellor, but he was careful to hide the fact of his supremacy under demonstrations of loyal obedience to the king. "He always faithfully obeyed his rightful lord in word and deed," says the singer

of Eadward's death-song, "nor left unheeded what was needful to his king." Over England, no doubt, the young earl's name exercized at first less command than his father's. But soon England saw with relief a ruler who brought with him no dark memories of the past, who had not stood by the invader's side at Assandun, whose first rise had not sprung from the favour of a foreign king, the sense of whose greatness was not dashed by suspicions of an Ætheling's murder or by tolerance of Swein's crimes.

His character.

Nor was Harold to prove himself wholly unworthy of the singular fortune which gave king and people alike peacefully into his hands. Born about 1021, in the opening of Cnut's reign, he was now in the prime of life and vigour, a tall, comely man, robust of frame, courteous and conciliatory, in temper a typical Englishman, indifferent to abuse, gifted with a cool self-command. Morally he rose in some points above his father's level; he was gentler in mood, more tolerant of opposition, more prone to forgive; he had far greater sympathy with English religion and English culture. He had inherited from Godwine an equal capacity for council and for war; he showed himself, in the years that followed, an active soldier and a skilful administrator. But in political ability he fell greatly below his father. Of the far-reaching statesmanship which had been Godwine's characteristic, of his capacity for wide combinations, of his foresight, his resource, the quickness with which he understood the need of change, and the moment for changing, Harold had little or none. But he was loyal to the policy of his house, and his patient, steady temper

CHAP. XI.

The Norman Conquest.

1053-1071.

was as fitted as that of his father for gradually winning back the power which the revolution of 1051 had shaken. As yet no dreams of any higher ambition seem to have visited the mind of Harold; his first political act indeed was to co-operate with Eadward in providing for the succession to the crown. All hope that the king would beget children by Eadgyth had now passed away; and, whether they were true or false, whispers from over sea of a promise to William of Normandy would spur the West-Saxon earl to a settlement of the question. The king's nearest kinsman was living in a far-off land. Two infant children of Eadmund Ironside had found a refuge from Cnut, nearly forty years back, in Hungary; and one of them, the king's nephew Eadward, was still living there with his son Eadgar, and his daughters Margaret and Christina. Eadward resolved to call the Ætheling home and own him for his heir; and in 1054 Bishop Ealdred was sent on this errand to the imperial court.

Harold's policy in Mercia

Hungary, however, was now at war with the empire, and after waiting a year at Cologne, Ealdred was forced to return and leave the plan to be carried out in more peaceful times. Conciliatory, however, as was his demeanour towards the king, Harold clung steadily to his father's policy of gathering England and its earldoms into the hands of his house. But we trace the caution and subtlety of his temper in the arrangements which followed on Godwine's return and death. The great Northumbrian earldom remained to Siward; the great West-Saxon earldom was taken by Harold himself. The policy of Godwine,

as we have seen, had been to break up the Mercian earldom till the province of Leofric was reduced to little more than Cheshire, Shropshire, and Staffordshire. But the death of Beorn, the exile of Swein, and the revolution of 1051 had done much to build up again the central earldom. Mid-Britain and Lincolnshire seem now to have become attached to Leofric, and Mercia may have already stretched southward again as far as Oxford, while Harold's old earldom of East-Anglia had gone to Leofric's son Ælfgar. But the annexation of Nottinghamshire to Northumbria deprived Mercia of its hold on the Trent, and ran a block of strange territory into the heart of Leofric's earldom; the grant of Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire to Siward barred all contact between the possessions of Leofric and his son; while Mercia was cut off from the Severn and the Welsh by the retention of Ralf in his earldom of the Magesætas or Herefordshire, and the assignment, as seems likely, of the Hwiccas of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire to Odda, in compensation for his loss of western Wessex. By these adroit arrangements the assent not only of Siward and the king's kinsmen was secured to Harold's elevation, but even the Mercian house was won over, while its real power of action remained dexterously fettered.

And in Northumbria.

In the course of the following year, however, the death of the earl of Northumbria set Harold more free to carry forward his father's plan of absorbing all England within the rule of his house. Never had Siward's name been so great as in his later years. His energetic action had done much to displace

Godwine; and if he consented to the earl's return it was doubtless not without a price. At any rate the year 1053 brought his continuous rule southward as far as the Trent in Nottinghamshire, and planted him in Mid-Britain as earl of Northampton and Huntingdon, making his power such as might well balance that of the house of Godwine. Another part of the price may possibly have been the assent of Godwine and Harold to a declaration of war on the Scot kingdom, to which Siward was urged alike by ambition and by family ties. Under the rule of Duncan the Scot kingdom had sunk low. The Orkney jarls had become masters of the Western Isles, of Caithness, and of the whole western coast to Galloway. The Mormær, or under-king of Moray, was practically independent in the north. The weakness of Duncan himself was fatally shown by the failure of the earlier attack which he had made on Northumbria, in spite of his close connexion by marriage ith its earls. In 1040, a year before the extension of Siward's power beyond the limits of Deira, Duncan made a fruitless raid as far as Durham; the burghers beat him back from the walls, and the Scots owed their safety to their horses, while Scottish heads hung round the battlements of the city. Immediately after this defeat, Duncan was slain by his subjects, and Macbeth, the Mormær of Moray, to whose charge the crime was laid, mounted the Scottish throne, while Duncan's two sons sought refuge with the Northumbrian earl. Though the rise of Macbeth seems to have marked a political revolution, the troubles of England, and it may be the jealousy of Godwine, had till now stood

in the way of Siward's action. But as the boys grew to manhood the ties of kinship told on Siward,[1] while the political advantages to which such a kinship might be turned may have influenced Eadward and Harold.

Death of Siward.

A new cause for action had now made itself felt. The flight of a body of Normans to the Scottish court on Godwine's return from exile forced on the struggle. The power of Macbeth had been doubled by his close alliance with the Orkney jarls, and his reception of the Normans threatened danger to the English realm. It was "by the king's order" that Siward marched over the border to fight Macbeth. The danger was soon dispelled. In 1054 a Northumbrian fleet appeared off the Scottish coast, and a Northumbrian army met Macbeth and his Orkney allies in a desperate battle. The English victory was complete; the Normans were cut to pieces, and Macbeth fled to his Norse allies to perish after four years of unceasing struggle with Duncan's son, Malcolm, whom Siward placed on the Scottish throne. But the English loss was heavy. Many of the hus-carls, both of Siward and of the king, lay on the field. There too fell his son, Osbeorn, and his sister's son, Siward. "Were his wounds in front or behind him?" Siward was said to have asked at the news of Osbeorn's fall, and when assured that all were in front, to have said he wished no other end, either for Osbeorn or himself. But while Macbeth escaped, Siward was

[1] Duncan must have been closely connected with the Northumbrian earls; for he was the father of these two boys by a wife whom Fordun (iv. 44) calls "consanguinea Siwardi comitis."

forced to fall back to prepare a fresh attack. His end however was near. Early in the next year, 1055, he died at York.[1] Legend told how, as sickness grew on him in the year after his victory, the earl called for his arms and stood harnessed to meet the call of death. "It was shame," he said, "for warrior to die like a cow!"[2] At Galmanho, in a suburb of York, he had reared a minster to St. Olaf,[3] and there he lay buried. The church grew into the great abbey of St. Mary, but a parish church beside it still preserves Olaf's name.

Tostig in Northumbria.

The death of Siward, and the old age of Leofric, who was now drawing to the grave, removed the check which their power had laid alike on Godwine and his son since the earl's return. The moment was come for undoing all that the revolution of 1051 had done; and Harold took up again his father's policy of gathering England, province by province, into the hands of his house. Siward had left but a boy, Waltheof, too young to bridle the rough men of the north; and passing over this child, Harold, in 1055, set his brother Tostig as earl over the Northumbrians. The step was a weighty one, not only in its relation to the house of Godwine, but as carrying forward the gradual consolidation of England itself. How steadily the royal authority had made its way during Eadward's reign was now shown by the accomplishment of what Eadgar and Dunstan had been unable to attempt, the bringing of Northumbria itself frankly

As this marriage was before 1040 the kinship must have come about through Siward's wife, Earl Ealdred's daughter.

[1] Eng. Chron. 1055.

[2] Hen. Huntingdon (Hamilton), pp. 195, 196.

[3] Eng. Chron. 1055.

into the general system of the realm. Till now Northumbria had held jealously to a partial independence. Siward was a Dane, and he was wedded to a wife who sprang from the blood of the old Northumbrian rulers. Loyal as he was to Eadward, his temper was too fierce to brook interference from the south, nor did royal court or council concern themselves with Siward's earldom. Little of the justice and order which prevailed south of the Humber had as yet made their way to the north of it. It was only by cruelty and violence that Siward held the country together. But, stern as Siward's temper was, he was of kin to the men he ruled. Tostig, dear as he was to Eadward, and matched though he might be with the daughter of the Flemish count, had nothing to link him with the north. He was neither Dane nor Northumbrian. He was a West-Saxon who came solely in right of his choice by the West-Saxon king and the far-off Witan in the south, and with him came the English rule;[1] under the new earl, king's writs ran to the north of Humber as they ran to the south of it. Nor was Tostig's temper likely to win the love of the Northumbrians. Stern, grave, reserved, he carried a passionate love of justice into this chaos of feuds and outrages. He forced peace upon the land by taking of life and by maiming

[1] The very character of the rising against Tostig in later days shows that the Northumbrians now considered themselves fully subjects of the English realm, and bound to appeal for justice to the English king; while the failure of Harald Hardrada to attract their support even against Harold shows at least how much the old sense of northern isolation had been weakened.

CHAP. XI

The Norman Conquest.

1053-1071.

of limb.[1] Only over his northern border did he carry out the policy of his predecessor. Malcolm, still

[1] Tostig's order was bought by a merciless justice, "patriam purgando talium cruciatu vel nece, et nulli *quantumlibet nobili* parcendo qui in hoc deprehensus esset crimine" (Vita Edw. (Luard) 422). There was nothing wonderful in Northumbria in his having Gamel son of Orm and Ulf son of Dolfin cut down in 1064 "Eboraci in camerâ suâ sub pacis fœdere per insidias" (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe) i. 223). What marked it was the rank of the sufferers. Orm, Gamel's father, had married a daughter of Earl Ealdred and a sister of Siward's wife; and though Gamel was not her son, he was thus of kin to the house of Siward. Englishmen and Danes alike joined in the bitter hostility awakened by Tostig's rule. In the leaders of the rising of 1065, we see among other great nobles, Gamel-bearn, who added to vast estates in Yorkshire a holding in Staffordshire; Dunstan, the son of Æthelnoth, whose lands may have lain about Pomfret; and Glonicorn, the son of Heardolf. With them also was young Waltheof, Siward's son, and his kinsman, Oswulf, Eadwulf of Bernicia's son, whom the revolution of 1065 was to set for a while in his father's Bernician earldom; Copsige, too, who for a time had been Tostig's deputy in the north, and was under William to seek to become Bernician earl, and to fall by Oswulf's sword; and Siward and Ealdred, descendants of Earl Uhtred by his third wife, Ælfgifu. Also Mærleswegen the shire-reeve, to whom Harold gave the north in hand after the battle of Stamford Bridge, the wealthiest of English proprietors, with great domains in the south-west as far as Cornwall; Archill "potentissimus Northanhymbrorum" (Ord. Vit. (Duchesne), 511 C.), whose vast estates stretched from Yorkshire to Warwick (Ellis, "Domesday," ii. 41); and Gospatric, the later earl of Northumbria, who through his mother Ealdgyth traced his descent to Earl Uhtred and his wife Ælfgifu, the daughter of King Æthelred.

The incidents of the yet later struggle with William the Conqueror throw light on the wild life of the earlier Northumbria. Of the last hero of the north, Earl Waltheof, songs told how head after head of the Frenchmen was shorn off by his sword-stroke as they sallied forth from the gate of York: told of his tall figure, and mighty strength, and sinewy arms, and bull-like

hard-pressed by Macbeth and the Orkney men, was thrown on the friendship of Northumbria; and Tostig, as his 'sworn brother,' gave him substantial help in the maintenance of his throne.

Ælfgar of East-Anglia.

The death of Siward, the elevation of Tostig, could hardly fail to rouse to a new effort the one house which remained to vie with the house of Godwine. Girt in by Godwine's sons to north and to south, isolated in Mid-Britain, Leofric was too old and sickly to renew single-handed and without help from the king the struggle of 1051. But his son, Ælfgar of East-Anglia, was now practically master of Mid-Britain, and in this emergency seems to have

chest (Will. Malm. "Gest. Reg." (Hardy), i. 427). The Saga of the Scandinavians made him burn 100 Frenchmen in a wood after the fight and give their corpses to the wolves of Northumberland (Saga of Harald Hardrada (Laing), "Sea-kings of Norway," iii. 95). Oswulf, when Copsige dispossesses him, "in fame et egestate sylvis latitans et montibus, tandem collectis quos eadem necessitas compulerat sociis" (Sim. Durh. "Gest. Reg." a. 1072). Churches gave no sanctuary: Copsige takes refuge in one, but "incendio ecclesiæ compellitur usque ad ostium procedere, ubi in ipso ostio manibus Osulfi detruncatur" (ib.). Then a robber kills Oswulf: "cum in obvii sibi latronis lanceam præceps irruerat, illico confossus interiit" (ib.). So in the rising of 1068, "seditiosi silvas, paludes, æstuaria et urbes aliquot in munimentis habent (Ord. Vit. (Duchesne), 511 B). Plures in tabernaculis morabantur; in domibus, ne mollescerent, requiescere dedignabantur, unde quidam eorum a Normannis silvatici cognominabantur" (ib. C.). When Robert of Comines takes refuge in the bishop's house at Durham, "domum cum inhabitantibus concremaverunt" (Sim. Durh. "Gest. Reg." a. 1069). In the wild country beyond the Tyne the clerks with Cuthbert's body, as they fled to Holy Isle, found a "præpositus Gillo-Michael," a "son of the devil," who robbed them of all he could, sacred as their burthen was. Priests, whether a hundred or ten, were among the slain at Fulford.

sought aid from his Welsh neighbours in the west. His alliance with Gruffydd of North-Wales marks the establishment of new political relations between England and the Welsh princes. No league of Englishmen with Welshmen with a view of influencing English politics had been seen since Penda's league with Cadwallon. The co-operation of the Welshmen with the Danes had been simply a co-operation of two foes against England itself. But from the time of Ælfgar to the time of Earl Simon of Montfort, the Welsh play a part in English history as allies of English combatants. The danger was the greater that Gruffydd had just become master through the death of a rival of the whole of our modern Wales; and we can hardly doubt that it was tidings of a negotiation between earl and prince that drove Harold to a sudden stroke, in the banishment of Ælfgar by the Witan in the spring of 1055.

Power of Harold.

Ælfgar avenged his outlawry by drawing a Danish force from Ireland and joining Gruffydd in a raid on Herefordshire. The rout of Earl Ralf's forces called Harold to the field; but his cool sense preferred peace to a useless victory; and at the close of the year Ælfgar was suffered to return baffled to his earldom and to look on at the further advancement of the house of Godwine. The terms of his restoration were seen on Leofric's death in 1057. Ælfgar was allowed to take his father's earldom, but it was an earldom shorn of many of its older provinces. The earl was girt in on almost every side by the possessions of the rival house. Tostig and Harold lay as before to the north and the

south of him. His own earldom of East-Anglia was given to Harold's brother Gyrth. The whole line of the Thames was grasped by the two younger sons of Godwine. Gyrth with his outlying earldom of Oxfordshire held its upper waters. Leofwine possessed the shires about its lower course, Essex, Middlesex, Hertford, possibly Buckingham to the north of it, Kent and Surrey to the south. The earldoms of Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire, held by Tostig as they had been held by Siward, pressed Ælfgar still closer to the east; while on his western border Harold himself, on the deaths of Odda and of Ralf, took possession of the earldom of the Magesætas and the course of the Severn as a check on the junction of Ælfgar and the Welsh.

Death of the Ætheling.

The aim which Godwine had set before him was all but reached. Only a few shires in the heart of the country had escaped the grasp of his house. And at the moment of this great accession of power fate flung in Harold's way the crown itself. The Ætheling Eadward at last came from Hungary to receive the pledge of his cousin's throne, but he had hardly landed when he died at London. "Rueful was it and harmful to all this folk," sang an English singer, "that he so soon ended his life when he to England came, for mishap to this wretched people." How great a mishap his death was no singer could know. At first it seemed to transmit the succession to his son Eadgar; and young as the boy was, he might find in Harold a guardian stronger and mightier than the elder Eadgar had found in Dunstan, or Æthelred in Æthelwine. But the blow had wakened bolder and

The aim of Harold.

less noble thoughts in Harold's breast; and from the Ætheling's death in 1057 we may date the upgrowth of that ambition which was to wreck England in its fall.

Harold throughout his career had found himself with few of Godwine's difficulties to face, neither the king's ill-will nor the opposition of the court, nor the rivalry of the great earls, nor the violence of Swein. The jealousy of new and advancing greatness which dogged the father's steps hampered the son's progress but little. The court was with him. The land grew accustomed to the power of his house. A few years broke the influence of every rival. The death of Siward, the old age of Leofric, and the exile of his son, left Mercia and Northumberland at his feet. Eadward's growing weakness threw power more and more into his hands, and as the king's end drew near the death of his destined successor bequeathed, as it seemed, the crown to a boy whose age left him naturally under the earl's guardianship. Had Harold been content with power the death of Eadward would have left him as completely master of England as before. But his air of cool reserve and self-command masked an ambition of that meaner sort which craves not only power but the show of power. Harold longed not to be the ruler of England only, but to be its king. During the last years of Eadward's life he was planning a constitutional revolution of the gravest kind, the setting aside a great national tradition, in the transfer of the crown from the house of Cerdic to a house which had sprung only a few years before from utter obscurity. Daring and unscrupulous as such a project was, the power which

Godwine had bequeathed to his son made it possible, had Harold held the threads of Godwine's policy with a hand like Godwine's. But the lower ability of the man was seen in the way in which advantage after advantage was thrown away. At home the union of the house of Godwine itself was broken.[1] His foreign relations snapped one by one. Flanders was lost. The Papacy was lost. Norway was left to prepare an attack unhindered by Swedish intervention. Across the Channel his advance was watched by one even more able and ambitious than himself.[2]

William and England.

William's hopes of the English crown are said to have been revived by a storm which threw Harold, while cruising in the Channel, on the coast of Ponthieu. Its count sold him to the duke; and as the price of return to England William forced him to swear on the relics of saints to support his claim to its throne. But, true or no, the oath told little on Harold's course. As the childless king drew to his grave one obstacle after another was cleared from the earl's path. His brother Tostig had become his most dangerous rival; but a revolt of the Northumbrians drove Tostig to Flanders, and the earl was able to win over the Mercian house of Leofric to his cause by owning Morkere, the brother of the Mercian earl Eadwine, as his brother's suc-

[1] In Tostig's visit to Nicolas in 1061, and in the remonstrances of the queen alluded to at the king's death ("Frequentius declamasse . . . . tum in frequentibus monitis ipsum regem et reginam," Vit. Edw. (Luard), 432), we may see traces of discord in the house of Godwine.

[2] I have formed the close of this chapter by taking some pages from the "Hist. of the Eng. People," vol. i. p. 111 *et seq.* (A. S. G.)

CHAP. XI.

The Norman Conquest.

1058. 1071.

cessor. His aim was in fact attained without a struggle. In the opening of 1066 the nobles and bishops who gathered round the death-bed of the Confessor passed quietly from it to the election and coronation of Harold. But at Rouen the news was welcomed with a burst of furious passion, and the duke of Normandy at once prepared to enforce his claim by arms. William did not claim the crown. He claimed simply the right, which he afterwards used when his sword had won it, of presenting himself for election by the nation, and he believed himself entitled so to present himself by the direct commendation of the Confessor. The actual election of Harold which stood in his way, hurried as it was, he did not recognize as valid. But with this constitutional claim was inextricably mingled resentment at the private wrong which Harold had done him, and a resolve to exact vengeance on the man whom he regarded as untrue to his oath. The difficulties in the way of his enterprize were indeed enormous. He could reckon on no support within England itself. At home he had to extort the consent of his own reluctant baronage; to gather a motley host from every quarter of France and to keep it together for months; to create a fleet, to cut down the very trees, to build, to launch, to man the vessels; and to find time amidst all this for the common business of government, for negotiations with Denmark and the Empire, with France, Brittany, and Anjou, with Flanders and with Rome, which had been estranged from England by archbishop Stigand's acceptance of his pallium from one who was not owned as a canonical Pope.

Stamford Bridge.

But his rival's difficulties were hardly less than his own. Harold was threatened with invasion not only by William but by his brother Tostig, who had taken refuge in Norway and secured the aid of its king, Harald Hardrada. The fleet and army he had gathered lay watching for months along the coast. His one standing force was his body of hus-carls, but their numbers only enabled them to act as the nucleus of an army. On the other hand the land-fyrd, or general levy of fighting-men, was a body easy to raise for any single encounter, but hard to keep together. To assemble such a force was to bring labour to a standstill. The men gathered under the king's standard were the farmers and ploughmen of their fields. The ships were the fishing-vessels of the coast. In September the task of holding them together became impossible, but their dispersion had hardly taken place when the two clouds which had so long been gathering burst at once upon the realm. A change of wind released the land-locked armament of William; but before changing, the wind which prisoned the duke brought the host of Tostig and Harald Hardrada to the coast of Yorkshire. The king hastened with his household troops to the north, and repulsed the Norwegians in a decisive overthrow at Stamford Bridge, but ere he could hurry back to London the Norman host had crossed the sea, and William, who had anchored on the 28th of September off Pevensey, was ravaging the coast to bring his rival to an engagement. His merciless ravages succeeded in drawing Harold from London to the south; but the king wisely refused to attack with

the troops he had hastily summoned to his banner. If he was forced to give battle he resolved to give it on ground he had himself chosen, and advancing near enough to the coast to check William's ravages he entrenched himself on a hill, known afterwards as that of Senlac, a low spur of the Sussex Downs near Hastings. His position covered London and drove William to concentrate his forces. With a host subsisting by pillage, to concentrate is to starve; and no alternative was left to the duke but a decisive victory or ruin.

Battle of Hastings.

On the fourteenth of October William led his men at dawn along the higher ground that leads from Hastings to the battle-field which Harold had chosen. From the mound of Telham the Normans saw the host of the English gathered thickly behind a rough trench and a stockade on the height of Senlac. Marshy ground covered their right; on the left, the most exposed part of the position, the hus-carls or bodyguard of Harold, men in full armour and wielding huge axes, were grouped round the Golden Dragon of Wessex and the Standard of the king. The rest of the ground was covered by thick masses of half-armed rustics who had flocked at Harold's summons to the fight with the stranger. It was against the centre of this formidable position that William arrayed his Norman knighthood, while the mercenary forces he had gathered in France and Brittany were ordered to attack its flanks. A general charge of the Norman foot opened the battle; in front rode the minstrel Taillefer, tossing his sword in the air and catching it again while he chaunted the

song of Roland. He was the first of the host who struck a blow, and he was the first to fall. The charge broke vainly on the stout stockade behind which the English warriors plied axe and javelin with fierce cries of "Out, out," and the repulse of the Norman footmen was followed by a repulse of the Norman horse. Again and again the duke rallied and led them to the fatal stockade. All the fury of fight that glowed in his Norseman's blood, all the headlong valour that spurred him over the slopes of Val-ès-dunes, mingled that day with the coolness of head, the dogged perseverance, the inexhaustible faculty of resource which shone at Mortemer and Varaville. His Breton troops, entangled in the marshy ground on his left, broke in disorder, and as panic spread through the army a cry arose that the duke was slain. William tore off his helmet; "I live," he shouted, "and by God's help I will conquer yet." Maddened by a fresh repulse, the duke spurred right at the Standard; unhorsed, his terrible mace struck down Gyrth, the king's brother; again dismounted, a blow from his hand hurled to the ground an unmannerly rider who would not lend him his steed. Amidst the roar and tumult of the battle he turned the flight he had arrested into the means of victory. Broken as the stockade was by his desperate onset, the shield-wall of the warriors behind it still held the Normans at bay, till William by a feint of flight drew a part of the English force from their post of vantage. Turning on his disorderly pursuers, the duke cut them to pieces, broke through the abandoned line, and made himself master

of the central ground. Meanwhile the French and Bretons made good their ascent on either flank. At three the hill seemed won, at six the fight still raged around the Standard where Harold's hus-carls stood stubbornly at bay on a spot marked afterwards by the high altar of Battle Abbey. An order from the duke at last brought his archers to the front. Their arrow-flight told heavily on the dense masses crowded around the king, and as the sun went down a shaft pierced Harold's right eye. He fell between the royal ensigns, and the battle closed with a desperate melly over his corpse.

Coronation of William.

Night covered the flight of the English army: but William was quick to reap the advantage of his victory. Securing Romney and Dover, he marched by Canterbury upon London. Faction and intrigue were doing his work for him as he advanced; for Harold's brothers had fallen with the king on the field of Senlac, and there was none of the house of Godwine to contest the crown. Of the old royal line there remained but a single boy, Eadgar the Ætheling. He was chosen king; but the choice gave little strength to the national cause. The widow of the Confessor surrendered Winchester to the duke. The bishops gathered at London inclined to submission. The citizens themselves faltered as William, passing by their walls, gave Southwark to the flames. The throne of the boy-king really rested for support on the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, Eadwine and Morkere; and William, crossing the Thames at Wallingford and marching into Hertfordshire, threatened to cut them off from their earldoms. The masterly

movement forced the earls to hurry home, and London gave way at once. Eadgar himself was at the head of the deputation who came to offer the crown to the Norman duke. "They bowed to him," says the English annalist, pathetically, "for need." They bowed to the Norman as they had bowed to the Dane, and William accepted the crown in the spirit of Cnut. London indeed was secured by the erection of a fortress which afterwards grew into the Tower, but William desired to reign not as a conqueror but as a lawful king. At Christmas he received the crown at Westminster from the hands of Archbishop Ealdred amid shouts of "Yea, yea," from his new English subjects. Fines from the greater landowners atoned for a resistance which now counted as rebellion; but with this exception every measure of the new sovereign showed his desire of ruling as a successor of Eadward or Ælfred. As yet indeed the greater part of England remained quietly aloof from him, and he can hardly be said to have been recognized as king by Northumberland or the greater part of Mercia. But to the east of a line which stretched from Norwich to Dorsetshire his rule was unquestioned, and over this portion he ruled as an English king. His soldiers were kept in strict order. No change was made in law or custom. The privileges of London were recognized by a royal writ which still remains, the most venerable of its muniments, among the city's archives. Peace and order were restored. William even attempted, though in vain, to learn the English tongue that he might personally administer justice to the suitors in his court. The kingdom seemed so tranquil

CHAP. XI.

The Norman Conquest.

1052-1071.

that only a few months had passed after the battle of Senlac when, leaving England in charge of his brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and his minister, William Fitz-Osbern, the king returned in 1067 for a while to Normandy. The peace he left was soon indeed disturbed. Bishop Odo's tyranny forced the Kentishmen to seek aid from Count Eustace of Boulogne; while the Welsh princes supported a similar rising against Norman oppression in the west. But as yet the bulk of the land held fairly to the new king. Dover was saved from Eustace; and the discontented fled over sea to seek refuge in lands as far off as Constantinople, where Englishmen from this time formed great part of the bodyguard or Varangians of the eastern emperors. William returned to take his place again as an English king. It was with an English force that he subdued a rising in the south-west with Exeter at its head, and it was at the head of an English army that he completed his work by marching to the North. His march brought Eadwine and Morkere again to submission; a fresh rising ended in the occupation of York, and England as far as the Tees lay quietly at William's feet.

The Norman Conquest.

It was in fact only the national revolt of 1068 that transformed the king into a conqueror. The signal for the revolt came from Swein, king of Denmark, who had for two years past been preparing to dispute England with the Norman, but on the appearance of his fleet in the Humber all northern, all western and south-western England, rose as one man. Eadgar the Ætheling with a band of exiles who had found refuge

in Scotland took the head of the Northumbrian revolt; in the south-west the men of Devon, Somerset, and Dorset gathered to the sieges of Exeter and Montacute; while a new Norman castle at Shrewsbury alone bridled a rising in the west. So ably had the revolt been planned that even William was taken by surprise. The outbreak was heralded by a storm of York and the slaughter of three thousand Normans who formed its garrison. The news of this slaughter reached William as he was hunting in the forest of Dean; and in a wild outburst of wrath he swore "by the splendour of God" to avenge himself on the North. But wrath went hand in hand with the coolest statesmanship. The centre of resistance lay in the Danish fleet, and pushing rapidly to the Humber with a handful of horsemen William bought at a heavy price its inactivity and withdrawal. Then turning westward with the troops that gathered round him he swept the Welsh border and relieved Shrewsbury, while William Fitz-Osbern broke the rising around Exeter. His success set the king free to fulfil his oath of vengeance on the North. After a long delay before the flooded waters of the Aire he entered York and ravaged the whole country as far as the Tees. Town and village were harried and burned, their inhabitants were slain or driven over the Scottish border. The coast was especially wasted that no hold might remain for future landings of the Danes. Crops, cattle, the very implements of husbandry were so mercilessly destroyed that a famine which followed is said to have swept off more than a hundred thousand victims. Half a century later indeed the

CHAP. XI.

The Norman Conquest.

1053. 1071.

land still lay bare of culture and deserted of men for sixty miles northward of York. The work of vengeance once over, William led his army back from the Tees to York, and thence to Chester and the west. Never had he shown the grandeur of his character so memorably as in this terrible march. The winter was hard, the roads choked with snow-drifts or broken by torrents, provisions failed; and his army, storm-beaten and forced to devour its horses for food, broke out into mutiny at the order to cross the bleak moorlands that part Yorkshire from the west. The mercenaries from Anjou and Brittany demanded their release from service. William granted their prayer with scorn. On foot, at the head of the troops which still clung to him, he forced his way by paths inaccessible to horses, often helping the men with his own hands to clear the road, and as the army descended upon Chester the resistance of the English died away.

Its completion.

For two years William was able to busy himself in castle-building and in measures for holding down the conquered land. How effective these were was seen when the last act of the conquest was reached. All hope of Danish aid was now gone, but Englishmen still looked for help to Scotland, where Eadgar the Ætheling had again found refuge, and where his sister Margaret had become wife of King Malcolm. It was probably some assurance of Malcolm's aid which roused the Mercian earls, Eadwine and Morkere, to a fresh rising in 1071. But the revolt was at once foiled by the vigilance of the Conqueror. Eadwine fell in an obscure skirmish, while Morkere found

shelter for a while in the fen country where a desperate band of patriots gathered round an outlawed leader, Hereward. Nowhere had William found so stubborn a resistance: but a causeway two miles long was at last driven across the marshes, and the last hopes of English freedom died in the surrender of Ely. It was as the unquestioned master of England that William marched to the north, crossed the Lowlands and the Forth, and saw Malcolm appear in his camp upon the Tay to swear fealty at his feet.

(*Unfinished Notes on Archbishop Stigand.*)

At the head of the English Church, in name at least, stood Stigand of Canterbury. We have seen the political importance of his elevation and the disappointment of the hopes embodied in it; but he represented in its highest form the principle of the house of Godwine, whose chaplain and negotiator he had been, and illustrates the conception of a High Churchman which that house entertained. His beginning had been strangely picturesque. On the site of his great victory at Assandun Cnut reared in 1020 a minster of stone, a rare sight in that country of timber and brick, and set Stigand there as its priest. Mr. Freeman and Mr. St. John assume this Stigand to be "no other than the famous archbishop. Stigand the Priest signs charters of Cnut in 1033 and 1035, and one without date, and one of Harthacnut in 1042 (Cod. Dip. iv. 46, vi. 185; vi. 187; iv. 65). He seems to be the only person of the name who signs." (Freeman, "Norm. Conq." i. 424, note 4.) He remained steadfast to the cause of the Danish house. He was chaplain to Harald Harefoot (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 193) as he had been to Cnut (Freeman, "Norm. Conq." i. 425), and afterwards the nearest friend and adviser of Cnut's widow (Eng. Chron. (Abingdon), 1043). Although it is said that in 1038 he was nominated to a bishopric, yet he was deposed before consecration for lack of money to out-bid his rivals for the office. (The story is only given by Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 193. He signs as bishop in Cod. Dip. 787. For date, see Freeman, "Norm. Conq." ii. 64, note.) At the accession of Eadward however, and possibly as a part of the price which the new king paid for his crown, he was named and consecrated to the bishopric of Elmham in the Easter Gemot of 1043. But before the year was over it would seem that some suspicion of political intrigues carried on by him through the Lady Emma had been awakened in men's minds. The seizure of the lands and treasures of Emma into the king's hands by decree of the Gemot was followed by the deposition of Stigand from his seat, and the confiscation of

his goods by the counsel of the same Gemot, which doubtless held him guilty of a share in the crimes of Emma. (Eng. Chron. (Abingdon), 1043.) "That Stigand should have supported the claims of Swegen is in itself not improbable. He had risen wholly through the favour of Cnut, his wife, and his sons." (Freeman, "Norm. Conq." ii. 65.) In the following year, however, Stigand had made his peace with Godwine and Eadward, and was again bishop of Elmham; (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 199), and three years later, 1047, rose to the see of Winchester. His services in securing Godwine's reconciliation made him primate in 1052, and from this time till after the Conquest he stood at the head of the English Church. He was not, however, satisfied with the wealth of Canterbury; as he had promoted his brother, Æthelmær, to Elmham when he went to Winchester, so on going to Canterbury he retained his rich see of Winchester—"præterea multas abbatias." (Will. Malm. "Gesta Pontif." (Hamilton), p. 36.) Of the "treasures of gold and silver" which he was said to have carried off even to his prison (Angl. Sac. i. 250), Winchester preserved a big silver cross with two images which were found in his treasury.

But though Stigand might sit at Canterbury, none held him for archbishop. To the Abingdon chronicler in 1053, a year after his elevation, he was still "Stigand bishop," though he "held the bishopric at Canterbury." In the same year bishops Leofwine of Lichfield and Wulfwig of Dorchester fared over sea for consecration rather than ask for it from him. (Eng. Chron. (Abingdon), 1053.) Robert, deposed by the Witan, fled to tell his tale at Rome: and Leo IX. was not likely to hold the deposition a valid one, nor seemingly did his successors Victor II. and Stephen IX. For six years Stigand remained an archbishop without a pallium, driven, as the story of his enemies ran, to use the pallium of the Norman Robert whose place he had usurped. At last in 1058 Stigand found means to get his pallium from the anti-pope Benedict. Such a step however really increased his difficulties. It enabled him, indeed, for the first and last time to hallow bishops, Æthelric of Selsey and Siward of Rochester; but it soon made matters worse. Benedict was driven from the Papal see in 1059, and his successors, Nicolas II. and Alexander II., with the deacon Hildebrand behind them, were only forced into a position of hostility which was made the more irreconcileable from the bitter strife in which the Papacy was then

engaged with the Emperor. Nor was the answer given by England to such a step on Stigand's part encouraging. So doubtful was his position still held to be, that in May 1060, a year after Benedict was driven out, Harold himself had Waltham hallowed by Archbishop Cynesige. The general drift of feeling too was shown in the journey of Walter the Lotharingian bishop of Hereford, and Gisa of Wells, to Rome itself in April 1061 for consecration from the very Pope, Nicolas, who had been defied by Stigand's act; and by Ealdred, the archbishop of York, also seeking his pallium at Rome in the same year, accompanied by two sons of Godwine, Tostig and Gyrth. In fact the very house of Godwine found itself unable to withstand the force of public feeling. The visit of Tostig and Gyrth to Pope Nicolas in 1061 pointed to a reconciliation with Nicolas; and as to the feeling of the king, Gisa himself tells us that it was Eadward that sent him to Rome and to Nicolas. ("Romam direxit, et a Nicolao Papa ordinatum . . . honorifice recepit." Hunter, "Eccl. Doc." p. 16.)

But a yet harder blow at Stigand's authority was to follow in the next year, dealt by the hands of Wulfstan. It is possible that the Papal legates who were sent to England in 1062 by the successor of Nicolas, Alexander II., brought a distinct and fresh sentence against Stigand. (Cf. the terms of Wulfstan's profession. Freeman, "Norm. Conq." ii. note cc.) They were received by the archbishop of York, who took them over England, and they were quartered at Worcester in charge of Prior Wulfstan. (Flor. Worc. (Thorpe), i. 220.) Their reception in the realm and in the Gemot at Worcester, and their influence in raising Wulfstan to the see of Worcester (which quite goes with his language about Stigand) secured England for the Papacy and made the archbishop's position untenable. Wulfstan's consecration indeed by Ealdred in September 1062 was the most public and decisive repudiation of Stigand that had been made. The words of his profession (only printed in Freeman, "Norm. Conq." ii. note cc.) are: "Quo tempore ego Wulstanus ad Wigorniensem Wicciorum urbem sum ordinatus episcopus, sanctam Dorobernensem ecclesiam cui omnes antecessores meos constat fuisse subjectos, Stigandus jampridem invaserat, metropolitanum ejusdem sedis vi et *dolo* expulerat, usumque pallii quod ei abstulit contempta apostolicæ sedis auctoritate temerare præsumpserat. *Unde a Romanis Pontificibus Leone, Victore, Stephano, Nicolao,*

Alexandro, vocatus, excommunicatus, damnatus est. Ipse tamen ut cœpit, in sui cordis obstinatione permansit. Per idem tempus jussa eorum Pontificum in Anglicam terram delata sunt prohibentium ne quis ei episcopalem reverentiam exhiberet, aut ad eum ordinandus accederet. Quo tempore Anglorum præsules, alii Romam, nonnulli Franciam sacrandi petebant; quidam vero ad vicinos coepiscopos accedebant. Ego autem Alredum Eboracensis ecclesiæ antistitem adii; professionem tamen de canonicâ obedientiâ usque ad præsentem diem facere distuli." The "perjuriis et homicidiis inquinatus" in Orderic's description of Stigand's deposition (Ord. Vit. (Duchesne) 516 B) may mean the bloodshed, &c., at the Gemot of 1052, but the "perjuriis" must go with the "dolo" of Wulfstan. None would have him. He did not consecrate Westminster. Harold in later days chose Ealdred to hallow him as king. Stigand indeed stood with Harold beside the bed of the dying Eadward; but it was only to hear himself denounced as Eadward predicted the coming woe. "Cognoscebant enim per sacri ordinis personas Christiani cultus religionem maxime violatam, hocque frequentius declamasse tum per legatos et epistolas suas Romanum Papam, tum in frequentibus monitis ipsum regem et reginam: sed divitiis et mundanâ gloriâ irrecuperabiliter quidam diabolo allecti, vitæ adeo neglexerant disciplinam ut non horrerent jam tunc imminentem incidere in Dei iram." Vita Edw. (Luard), 431—432. "Cunctisque stupentibus et terrore agente tacentibus, ipse archiepiscopus qui debuerat vel primus pavere, vel verbum consilii dare, infatuato corde submurmurat in aurem ducis, senio confectum et morbo, quid diceret nescire." Vita Edw. (Luard), 431. The "divitiis" above points to the ground which common rumour assigned for Stigand's obstinacy.

His presence with the earl at the king's bedside only shows that Harold was still driven to cling to him, though he, with all England, held him to possess no spiritual power.

(*I have reprinted from an article written by Mr. Green in the* SATURDAY REVIEW *for August* 22, 1868, *the following passages, which deal with the character of Harold, and, in the scarcity of materials, furnish some commentary on the text.*—A. S. G.)

"The death of Godwine in the very hour of his triumph bequeathed the direction of English affairs to his son, Earl Harold. It is the special merit of Mr. Freeman's elaborate researches into the later history of Eadward's reign that they bring home to us the fact that the man, who in common narratives starts into rule for a single year by his seizure of the crown, had in reality been the ruler of England for twelve years before. The coronation of Harold was, as he fairly puts it, the natural climax of the life of one who at twenty-four years old "was invested with the rule of one of the great divisions of England; who seven years later became the virtual ruler of the kingdom; who at last, twenty-one years from his first elevation, received, alone among English kings, the crown of England as the free gift of her people." The obvious lesson of all this is that Harold can no longer be judged from the single stand-point of Senlac. The year of his great close is simply the last of an administration which extended over thirteen years; and it is the general tenour of that administration, rather than of any isolated events in it, that must really give us the measure of Harold. He came to power, it must be remembered, unfettered by many of the obstacles that had beset his father. The revolution which had restored his house had freed him from the internal rivalry of a foreign party at the court. The defeat of Macbeth and the elevation of a nominee of England to the Scottish throne removed all danger from the north. If any fears of a Danish reaction still lingered, they must have been removed by the death of Osgod Clapa. Siward and Leofric, the two formidable counterpoises to the power of his house, passed away in the first years of his rule. Godwine had carried with him to his grave a thousand party resentments, gathered along a tortuous

course of political intrigue. The one great moral obstacle that stood between England and his family had died with Swein. None of the jealousy which Eadward displayed towards the supremacy of his first minister seems to have displayed itself towards his second. For twelve years he was the undisputed governor of the realm. And this political supremacy was backed by high personal qualities. . . . The character of the Earl, however, remains singularly obscure. The very nature of his administration itself, during the greater part of it, is dark and mysterious. The three last years of it, indeed, are memorable enough—the years of the Welsh campaign, the expulsion of Tostig, the accession to the Crown; but the ten that precede them defy even the industry of Mr. Freeman. . . . With the exception of his doubtful voyage through France, it is notable that throughout the rule of Harold England is without any foreign relations whatever; for the embassy to the Imperial Court in 1054 had a simply domestic purpose, and the nomination of a few Lotharingian bishops does not affect the really insular nature of his policy. Nor is this absence of outer relations compensated by any internal activity. Mr. Freeman marks, indeed, the predominance of ecclesiastical administration as the characteristic of this earlier period of Harold's rule; but when we look closer into the mass of details, there is simply no ecclesiastical administration whatever, no conspicuous synod, no great Church reform—nothing, in a word, but the appointment of a few prelates in the place of others, the attempted introduction of the rule of Chrodegang, and, so far as Harold himself is concerned, the foundation of a single religious house. . . . In his civil administration, as in his foreign and ecclesiastical, it is difficult to grasp any new or large conception in the mind of Harold, such as those which lift his Norman rival into greatness. Take him at his best, there is little more than a sort of moral conservatism, without a trace of genius or originality, or even any attempt at high statesmanship. Take him at his worst, and we can hardly fail to see a certain cunning and subtlety of temper that often co-exists with mediocrity of intellectual gifts. In the internal government of the realm he simply follows out his father's policy, while avoiding his father's excesses. For one great political scandal he is solely responsible. It may not have been with a deliberate purpose of neutralizing the great

constitutional check on an English king that he allowed the highest dignity of the English Church to remain throughout his rule in a state of suspension. But if we acquit him of a purpose which would be a crime, it can only be on the plea of an indifference to the true relations of the State which was even worse than a crime. In all other respects his civil administration during his first ten years of rule is the mere continuation of his father's. There is the same scheme of family aggrandizement, carried out in even a less scrupulous way. To gain the paternal earldom of Wessex, indeed, Harold had been compelled to resign his own lordship of East-Anglia to the rival power of Mercia. But two years after, when he was firm in his saddle and the death of Siward had added the north to the domain of his family, Harold dealt a sharp blow at the one house that held him in check. . . . There are but four accounts left of the banishment of Earl Ælfgar in 1055, and of these three agree in declaring the earl guiltless, or nearly guiltless. The fourth, which avers that he publicly confessed his guilt, but that the confession escaped him unawares, is 'that of the chronicler who is most distinctly a partisan of Harold's.' . . . Harold was forced, indeed, to consent to his victim's restoration; but when Leofric's death threw his father's earldom into his hands, he wrested back East-Anglia and girded Mercia round with the chain of the possessions of his house. It is impossible, in the absence of facts, to explain the change of policy that followed. It may have been that the house of Leofric, confined now to a few central counties of the realm, was no longer dangerous as a foe, and might be useful as a friend. It may have been that Harold was jealous of the power of Tostig and of his influence with the king. All that we know is that Harold suddenly reversed his whole previous policy, and in spite or in consequence of his brother's feud with the sons of Ælfgar, intermarried with their house. The marriage was quickly followed by the rising of Northumbria against its earl, and the rising was clearly prompted by Mercian instigation. But was the instigation simply Mercian? Harold was now the fast friend of Eadwine and Morkere; the expulsion of Tostig removed the only possible rival to his hopes of the Crown; the division of Northumbria into two earldoms, so evidently stipulated as the price of Morkere's accession, told only to Harold's profit. It is certain that when the two brothers

stood face to face the charge was openly made that the revolt had been owing to the machinations of Harold. It is certain that the charge was so vehemently urged and received so much credence, that Harold thought it needful to purge himself legally by oath. Anyhow, in spite of the violent opposition of the king, the royal minister yielded every point to the insurgents, and his brother fled over sea. It is, we repeat, impossible from sheer dearth of information to disentangle the threads of this complicated web of intrigue and revolution, or to pronounce with any certainty on the character of Harold's course in the matter. If Harold was simply using England as a vast chess-board, and moving friends and foes in an unscrupulous play for power, he was amply punished. The revenge of Tostig proved the ruin of Harold. The victory of Stamford Bridge was the prelude of the defeat of Senlac. . . . Even hero-worship can hardly err in its praises of that final struggle, and the critic who rates Harold lowest may own that there are supreme moments when even the commonplace gather grandeur ere they pass away. But the character of the man and of his rule is to be gathered, not from the hour of heroic struggle, but from the years that preceded it. A policy of mere national stagnation within and without sprang from the natural temper, the poverty of purpose, the narrowness of conception, of a mind which it is impossible to call great."

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INDEX.

A

Abbo of Fleury writes the life of St. Eadmund, 340

Abingdon, Æthelwold made abbot of, 295 and *note* 2; school at, 296; Northumbrians visit Eadred at, 298, *note;* Eadwig's benefactions to, 312, *note* 2; clerks from Glastonbury accompany Æthelwold to, 343, *note* 2; dealings of its abbots with the burghers of Oxford, 439; Chronicle of, 370, *note* 2

Aclea, battle of, 74, 79, 80

Adela, sister of King Henry of France, marries Baldwin, Count of Flanders, 513, 516; betrothed to Richard III. of Normandy, 521

Adelard of Ghent, his life of S. Dunstan, 281, *note*

Administration, royal, 542; its developement under Æthelred, 429-431; under Cnut, 493, *note;* under Eadward, *ib.*

Æfic made High Reeve, 394 and *note* 4; slain by Leofsige, 395 and *note* 1

Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex, father-in-law of King Eadmund, 261

Ælfgar, son of Leofric, made earl of East-Anglia, 530, 536; makes alliance with Gruffydd of North-Wales, 564; outlawed, *ib.*; restored, *ib.*; succeeds Leofric in Mercia, *ib.*

Ælfgar, son of Ælfric, blinded, 378

Ælfgifu, daughter of Æthelgifu, marries Eadwig, 311; parted from him by sentence of Archbishop Odo, 312; seized and carried out of the realm, 314, 315, *note* 1

Ælfgifu, daughter of Æthelred II., marries Earl Uhtred of Northumbria, 399, 496, *note*

Ælfheah, St., bishop of Winchester, carries on the policy of Ælfric, 377, *note;* negotiates a truce with Swein and Olaf, 380; negotiates a treaty between Olaf and Æthelred, 381; translated to Canterbury, 402, *note* 1; his injunctions for the observance of religious duties, 402; seized by Thurkill as hostage for the Danegeld, 409; his martyrdom, *ib.*; his body translated to Canterbury, 433

Ælfheah, kinsman of Eadwig, 306; made ealdorman of Central Wessex, 316

Ælfhelm, ealdorman of the Northumbrian Provinces, 372, *note;* made earl of Deira, 373; slain, 398 and *note* 2; Florence's legendary account of his murder, *ib.*, *note* 2

Ælfhere, kinsman of Eadwig, becomes one of his chief counsellors, 306 and *note* 4; made ealdorman of Mercia, 309; his rise traced in the charters, 310, *note* 3; revolts against Eadwig, 312; his influence with Eadgar, 316; his independence of the Crown, 348 and *note* 2; his title of "Heretoga," *ib.*

heads the anti-monastic party, 352; supports the claim of Eadward to the Crown, *ib.*; translates the body of Eadward from Wareham to Shaftesbury, 357; his death, *ib.*

Ælflæd, daughter of Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex, marries his successor, Brihtnoth, 261

Ælfred, King of Wessex, his birth at Wantage, 99; his visit to Rome in early childhood, *ib.*; authorities for his life, *ib.*, *note* 2; visits Rome and Gaul with his father, 99; his early love of letters, *ib.*; becomes next heir to the Crown by the accession of Æthelred, 101; becomes Secundarius, 87, *note* 2, 101; his marriage, 101; his sickness, *ib.*; marches with Æthelred against the Danes at Nottingham, *ib.*; leads the van at Ashdown, 103; succeeds Æthelred as king, 104; first King of Wessex who was also King of the Mercians, 48; defeated by the Danes at Wilton, 105; buys their withdrawal from Wessex, *ib.*; sends alms to Rome and India, *ib.* and *note* 2; doubtful story of his besieging the Danes at London, *ib.*, *note* 2; marches upon Guthrum's camp near Wareham, 108; makes a treaty with the Danes, *ib.*; besieges them in Exeter, *ib.*; falls back upon Somerset, 109; encamps at Athelney, 110; musters the West-Saxon host at Ecgberht's stone, 111; defeats the Danes at Edington, *ib.*; treaty of Wedmore, 112; his work of restoration, 131-132; founds abbeys at Winchester, Shaftesbury, and Athelney, 133; his military reforms, 133-135; his extension of the thegn-service, 135, 136; his reorganization of the fyrd, 136, 137; creates a national fleet, 137, 138 and *note* 2; his conception of public justice, 139 and *note* 2; his difficulties in enforcing justice, 140-141; becomes King of Mercia, 143; sets up a mint at Oxford, 144, 438; at Gloucester, 440; his laws, 26, 146 and *note* 1, 338; drives the Danes from the siege of Rochester, 149; his struggle with Guthrum, *ib.*; his [second] peace with Guthrum, 125; its true date, 151; its terms, 151 and *note*; becomes master of London, 150 and *note* 2; restores and peoples it, *ib.*; renews its walls, 197, 459; rise of national sentiment under, 153-154; his intellectual work, 156-158; his chaplains, 157; education of his children, 157 and *note* 2, 190 and *note* 2; of his nobles, 157, *note* 2, 160; his zeal for learning, 157 and *notes*, 158; sends for scholars from over-sea, 158; learns Latin, 158 and *note* 1; story of Asser's visit to, 158-160; his work in the creation of English prose, 160, 161; his translations, 162-164, 168; work in the English Chronicle, 166 and *note* 3, 167; its effects, 167 and *note* 2; holds Hasting at bay for a year, 171; his negotiations with Hasting, *ib.*; rising of the Danelaw against him, *ib.*; defends Exeter, 172; cuts off the retreat of the Danes on the Lea, 173; his mode of life, 174, 175 and *notes*; his love of strangers, 176 and *notes*; his court, 180; his budget, 181, 182; his foreign policy, 182, 183; his dealings with the North-Welsh, 183; his alliance with the Scot kingdom, 186; his death, *ib.*; his character, 186-188; officers of the royal household in his time, 542

Ælfred, son of Æthelred, his residence at the Norman Court, 472; prepares to invade England with Robert the Devil, 474; lands at Dover, 482; seized at Guildford, *ib.*; blinded, *ib.*; dies at Ely, *ib.*

Ælfred, an English fugitive from Deira, settles in Westmoringaland, 276

Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury, his death, 402, *note* 1

Ælfric, archbishop of York, charges Godwine with the death of the Ætheling Ælfred, 482, 484
Ælfric succeeds Æthelmær as ealdorman of Central Wessex, 372, *note;* negotiates a treaty with the Norwegian Wikings, 375, *note* 1; joint leader of the fyrd with Thored, 377; joins the Norwegians, *ib.*; returns, and is reinstated, 382; becomes first among the ealdormen on death of Æthelweard, 394; heads the fyrd of Wiltshire and Hampshire against Swein, 396: his failure and its causes, 397 and *note* 1
Ælfric, son of Ælfhere, succeeds his father as ealdorman of Mercia, 357, 372, *note;* exiled, *ib.*, 374
Ælfric, scholar of Bishop Æthelwold, his grammar and homilies, 339; writes an English version of the Bible, 340
Ælfric, kinsman of Godwine, elected archbishop of Canterbury, 524; political import of his election, 524, 525; set aside by Eadward, 525
Ælfsige, ealdorman, 311, *note* 3, 316, *note* 1
Ælfstan, abbot of St. Augustine's at Canterbury, his struggle with Christ Church for the possession of Sandwich, 446, *note* 3
Ælfthryth, daughter of Ælfred, her education, 157, *note* 2, 190, *note* 2; marries Baldwin II. of Flanders, 182, 249
Ælfthryth, daughter of ealdorman Ordgar, 316, 320, *note* 1, 321, *notes;* wife of Æthelwold of East-Anglia, 316, *note* 2: of Eadgar, 316, *note* 1, 320, 344; mother of Æthelred II., 320
Ælfwen, wife of Æthelstan the "Half-King," foster-mother of Eadgar, 286
Æthelbald, second son of Æthelwulf, king of Kent, 83; succeeds his father in Wessex, 84; his marriage with Judith, 82, *note;* his death, 100
Æthelberht, third son of Æthelwulf, 85; succeeds Æthelbald in Kent, 85, *note* 2; in Wessex, 85; his death, 86, 101
Æthelberht, king of Kent, gives Bishop Mellitus the site for St. Paul's Church, 453; his laws, 20, 21 and *notes* 1 and 2
Æthelberht, schoolmaster at York, 42; Alcuin educated under, *ib.*; succeeds Ecgberht as archbishop of York, *ib.*; rebuilds the minster, *ib.*
Æthelflæd (daughter of Ælfred), wife of Æthelred, ealdorman of Mercia, 144, *note* 2; joint-ruler of Mercia with Æthelred, 196; restores Chester, 194, 441; seizes the line of the Watling Street, 198; fortifies Scargate and Bridgenorth, *ib.*; Tamworth, 200; Stafford, 201; Eddisbury, Warwick, Cherbury, Warbury, and Runcorn, 202; takes Derby and Leicester, 207; receives the submission of York, *ib.*, *note* 2; her death, 207; its date, 191, *note* 4; account of her campaigns in the Chronicle, *ib.*
Æthelflæd, niece of Æthelstan, a kinswoman of Dunstan, 282, *note* 1
Æthelflæd, daughter of Ælfgar, marries Eadmund, 261
Æthelflæd the White, first wife of Eadgar, and mother of Eadward the Martyr, 320
Æthelgar, bishop of Crediton, possibly a kinsman of Dunstan, 282, *note* 1
Æthelgifu influences Eadwig against Dunstan, 307; causes Dunstan to be outlawed, 309; marries her daughter to Eadwig, 311
Æthelhelm, ealdorman of Dorset, defeated and slain by the Wikings, 75
Æthelings, their original distinction from the ceorls, 34; their relation to the tribal king, *ib.*; their altered position on the extinction of the smaller kingdoms, 35; displaced by the thegns, *ib.*; answer to the Scandinavian jarls, 57

Æthelm, archbishop of Canterbury, said to be a kinsman of Dunstan and to have brought him to Court, 282, *notes* 1 and 3; his death, *ib.*, *note* 3

Æthelmær, kinsman of Eadwig, 306

Æthelmær, ealdorman of Hampshire, 372, *note*; his death, *ib.*

Æthelmær succeeds Æthelweard as ealdorman of Western Wessex, 411; submits to Swein, *ib.*

Æthelmær, brother of Stigand, succeeds him as bishop of Elmham, 579

Æthelnoth, ealdorman of Somerset, 111

Æthelred, fourth son of Æthelwulf, king of Wessex, 86; his accession marks a new step in the consolidation of Wessex, *ib.*, *note* 2; marches to aid Burhred against the Danes, 95; failure of their joint attack on the Danes at Nottingham, *ib.*; defeated by the Danes near Reading, 102; his victory at Ashdown, 103; mortally wounded at Merton, 104; his death, *ib.* and *note* 2; his burial at Wimborne, 105

Æthelred II., son of Eadgar and Ælfthryth, 320; his adherents, 352; his coronation, 356 and *note* 1; quarrels with Dunstan, 357, 358; materials and authorities for his reign, 370, *note* 2; his title of "Unrædig," 371; his character, 371, 372; his policy towards the ealdormanries, 373, 374, 399; his outer difficulties, 374, 375; makes a treaty with the Norwegian Wikings, 375; with Richard of Normandy, 376 and *note*; breach of treaty with the Norwegians, 377; causes Ælfgar to be blinded, 378; gathers an army at Andover, 380; makes a truce with Swein and Olaf, *ib.*; makes a treaty with Olaf, 381; weakness of the English defence under him, 382, 383; engages a fleet of Danish mercenaries, 383; makes descents on the Isle of Man and Cumberland, *ib.*; on the Cotentin, 384; his marriage with Emma of Normandy, 386, 393; its effects, 392, 393; number and order of the ealdormen under him, 393, 394; sends Leofsige to buy off the pirates, 394; makes Æfic High Reeve, 394 and *note* 4; policy of his employment of hired Danes, 395 and *note* 3; massacre of St. Brice's day, 396; makes Eadric High-Reeve, 400; holds the Danes in check on the south coast, *ib.*; buys a truce with them, 401; exacts an oath of allegiance from his subjects, *ib.*; his measures of defence, 402; gathers a fleet at Sandwich, 403, 446, *note* 1; its failure, 406, 407; buys the withdrawal of the Danes, 408; hires Thurkill, 409; defends London against Swein, 411; sends his wife and sons to Normandy, *ib.*; his flight and its consequences, 412; his return, 413; dissensions in his court, *ib.*; withdraws to London, 415; dies there, *ib.*; his financial and administrative organization, 404-406; his fiscal revolution, 431; growth of the administrative system under him, 429-431; his creation of the Head-Thegn or High-Reeve, 429, 543; his regulations concerning the trade of London, 463; coins of, struck at Bristol, 443, *note* 2

Æthelred, son of Æthelwold Mol., expels Alchred from Northumbria, 40; driven into exile, *ib.*; restored, 41; slays Osred and the children of Alfwold, *ib.*; slain, 43

Æthelred, ealdorman of Mercia, 144 and *note* 2; his titles, *ib.*, *note* 2; married to Æthelflæd, *ib.*; London intrusted to him by Ælfred, 151; holds the line of the Thames against the Danes, 171; attacks the Wikings' camp in Essex, 172; his victory at Buttington, *ib.*; drives the Danes from Chester, 173; restores it, 194 and *note* 2; probably rears the castle-mound at Oxford, 438; his gifts to

Bishop Werfrith, 440; his death, 196
Æthelric, bishop of Selsey, consecrated by Stigand, 579
Æthelstan, son of Eadward the Elder, his childhood, 175; his accession, 217; chosen king by the Mercians, *ib.*, *note* 3; hallowed at Kingston, *ib.*; personal appearance, 218; his character and that of his reign, 218, 219; authorities for his reign, 218, *note* 2; knighted in his childhood by Ælfred, 175, 219; first king of West-Saxons, Mercians, and Northumbrians, 48; league of the Danes, Scots, and Welsh against, 219; its submission, 220 and *note* 2; reduces the North-Welsh chiefs to subjection and tribute, 220; drives the West-Welsh from Exeter, *ib.*; defeats the Cornwealas at Bolleit, *ib.*; becomes king of Northumbria, 221; composition of his witenagemots, 221 and *note* 2; their national character, 221 and *note* 2, 224; his foreign policy, 219, 249; his alliance with the northern clergy, 222; his favour to the northmen, 223; his character in the northern sagas, *ib.*; his restoration of public order, 225; petitioned by the Witan of Kent to enforce justice, 30; regulation of justice under him, 225, 226; scope of his laws, 225, *note* 4, 234, *note* 2; his law concerning property and trade, 227; concerning slaves, 334; his royal style, 240-241, 269 *note* 2; Northumbria rises against him, 242; his foreign alliances, 250, 251; marches into the north and sends a fleet to harry the Scottish coast, 252 and *note* 4; receives a fresh submission from Constantine, *ib.*; withdrawal of the northern jarls from his court, 253 and *note* 2; general rising of the North against, 253; his victory at Brunanburh, 254; failure of his plans of national union, 257; razes the Danish fortress at York, 450; his alliance with Norway, 262; sets Eric Bloody-Axe as under-king in Northumbria, 263; gives shelter to Lewis From-over-sea, 265; his negotiations with Hugh of Paris and William Longsword, *ib.*; his alliance with Lewis and Arnulf against the Normans, 267; sends a fleet to the coast of Boulogne, 268; his pilgrimage to Glastonbury, 283, *note* 1; his death, 269; its date, 268 and *note*; its effect on Frankish politics, 272; popular ballads of his life, preserved by William of Malmesbury, 297, *note*
Æthelstan, son of Æthelwulf, under-king of Kent, 78; defeats the Wikings at Sandwich, *ib.*; his death, 83 and *note*
Æthelstan, ealdorman of East-Anglia, 260; native of Devon, *ib.*, *note* 2; his possible descent from Æthelred I., *ib.*; nicknamed the "Half-King," 262; his wife Ælfwen the foster-mother of Eadgar, 286; Primarius under Eadmund, *ib.* and *note* 3; his increased influence under Eadred, 286, 287; his friendship with Dunstan, 286; withdraws to a monastery, 309; his ealdormanry parted among his four sons, *ib.*; date of his retirement, 310, *note* 3
Æthelstan, ealdorman, distinguished from Æthelstan of East-Anglia, 310, *note* 3; joins the revolt against Eadwig, 313, *note*
Æthelstan, chaplain to Ælfred, 157
Æthelstan, *see* Guthrum
Æthelwald, son of Æthelred I., claims the Crown against Eadward the Elder, 191; driven out of Wessex, becomes king of Northumbria, *ib.*; rouses the Danes of East-Anglia to attack Wessex, *ib.*; his defeat and death, *ib.*
Æthelweard, son of Ælfred, his education, 190
Æthelweard of East-Anglia, son of Æthelwine, slain at Assandun, 417
Æthelweard made ealdorman of the Western Provinces by Eadward

the Martyr, 372, *note;* becomes first of the ealdormen on death of Æthelwine, *ib.*, 380, *note* 2; negotiates a treaty of subsidy with the Norwegian Wikings, 375, *note* 1; negotiates a truce with Swein and Olaf, 380; and a treaty between Olaf and Æthelred, 381; his death, 394

Æthelweard the historian, descendant of Æthelred I., 51, *note* 1; probably the ealdorman of that name, *ib.*; character of his Chronicle, 195, *note* 2

Æthelweard (friend of Ælfric), 340, *note;* induces Ælfric to translate the Bible, 340

Æthelwine becomes ealdorman of East-Anglia, 316, *note* 1; upholds the cause of the monks, 352; supports the claim of Æthelred to the Crown, *ib.*; his share in the murder of Eadward, 356; becomes first of the ealdormen on Ælfhere's death, 372, *note;* his death, *ib.*, 373

Æthelwold, Dunstan's chief scholar and assistant, 295; intends to go abroad for study, but is prevented by Eadred, *ib.*, *note* 2; made abbot of Abingdon, 295 and *note* 2; founds a school there, 296; sends Osgar to learn the Benedictine rule at Fleury, 343, *note* 2, 344; made bishop of Winchester, 344; his school there, 339; introduces monks into his cathedral church and diocese, *ib.*; possibly author of the last continuation of the Winchester Chronicle, 340; adheres to Eadwig, 312, *note* 2

Æthelwold, ealdorman of East-Anglia, joins the revolt against Eadwig, 313, *note*; marries Ordgar's daughter Ælfthryth, 316, *note* 2; his death, *ib.*, *notes* 1 and 2

Æthelwold Moll seizes the Northumbrian throne, 40; his victory at the Eildon Hills, *ib.*; marries a daughter of Offa, *ib.*; his death, *ib.*

Æthelwulf, son of Ecgberht, King of Kent, 69, *note*; succeeds Ecgberht in Wessex, 73; his character, 74; defeats the Danes at Aclea, 74, 79; defeated by the Wikings at Charmouth, 75; his alliance with the Emperor, 79; conquers Anglesea, 80; his supposed institution of tithes, *ib.*, *note*; his pilgrimage to Rome, 81; his alliance with Charles the Bald, 80, 81; his marriage with Judith, 82 and *note;* revolt of Wessex against, 83; decision of the witenagemot on the succession, *ib.*; his settlement of the succession, *ib.*, *note;* retires into the Eastern Kingdom and resigns Wessex to Æthelbald, 84; his death, 85; his bequest of the Crown set aside by the Witan, *ib.*, *note* 2

Ætheric, an East-Saxon, charged with support of Swein, 379

Agriculture, its prominence in the laws of Ine, 21 and *note* 4

Airsome, probable origin of its founders, 117

Alan, duke of Brittany, expelled by William Longsword, 251; takes refuge at the court of Æthelstan, *ib.*; ward of Eadward the Elder, *ib.*, *note;* returns, 266

Alban, St., church dedicated to him in Wood Street, its origin and history, 457 and *note*

"Alban" or "Albania," supersedes "Pictland," 186 and *note* 2

Alchred succeeds Æthelwold Moll as king of Northumbria, 40; driven out by Æthelred, takes refuge among the Picts, *ib.*; claims descent from Ida, *ib.*, *note* 4

Alclwyd captured by the Picts, 275

Alcuin, his birth and education, 42; goes to Rome with Æthelberht, *ib.*; master of the school at York, *ib.* and note 2; fetches the pall for Archbishop Æthelberht, *ib.*; his meeting with Charles the Great at Parma, *ib.*; his work among the Franks, *ib.*; his return to Northumbria, 43; intercedes with Charles for the Northum-

brians on the murder of Æthelred, *ib.*
Aldate or Aldad, St., church at Oxford dedicated to, 438
Aldermanbury, its probable origin, 462
Ald-gate, soke of, its rise in Eadgar's day, 464; held by Queen Matilda, *ib.*, *note* 2
Aldulf, bishop of Worcester, 341, *note*
Alençon, William at, 509
Alexander II., Pope, sends legates to England, 580
Alfwold, son of Oswulf, succeeds Æthelred in Northumbria, 40; slain, 41
Allegiance, personal, growth of the principle of, 209; its influence on the English kingship, 210; oath of, required by Eadward the Elder, 211, 212; by Eadmund, 212; by Æthelred II., 401
All Hallows, church at Barking, 456, *note* 1, 464; at Oxford, 438
Alre, baptism of Guthrum at, 125
Ambleside, 277
Andover, treaty made with Swein and Olaf at, 380; treaty between Æthelred and Olaf at, 381
Anlaf, *see* Olaf
Andredsweald, the, the Wikings in, 170; its extent, *ib. note* 4
Anglesea conquered by Æthelwulf and Burhred, 80
Anglia, East, descents of the Wikings on, 77; Danes winter in, 91; conquered by Ivar (Inguar) and Hubba, *ib.*, *note* 1, 96; divided by Guthrum, 123; Danish settlements in, 124; their character, 125; rises against Eadward, 204; submits to him, 205; the (Danish) army of, swear allegiance to him, 211; its "folks," 236; retention of tribal nomenclature in, 237, *note* 2; late introduction of the shire-system into, *ib.*; ealdormanry of, its creation, 260 and *note* 1; its extent, 261 and *note* 1; parted among the four sons of Æthelstan, 309; revival of monasticism in, 344; attacked by Swein, 397; ruled by Ulfcytel, 393, 394, 397; its fyrd defeated by Thurkill, 407; kings of, *see* Eadmund, Guthrum; ealdormen of, *see* Æthelstan, Æthelweard, Æthelwine, Æthelwold, Thurkill; earls of, *see* Ælfgar, Gyrth, Harold
"Anglo-Saxon," true meaning and use of the phrase, 193, *note*
"Angul-Saxons," king of the, usual style of Eadward the Elder, 192 and *note*; of Æthelstan, 240-241
Anjou, its rise, 508; counts of, *see* Geoffrey
Aquitaine, the Truce of God instituted in, 489
Archbishops of Canterbury, their position, 71; supersede the West-Saxon bishops as national advisers of the Crown, 318; their relation to the Crown altered by the new system of administration, 430; *see* Ælfheah, Ælfric, Æthelm, Ceolnoth, Dunstan, Eadsige, Odo, Plegmund, Robert, Sigeric, Stigand, Theodore; archbishops of York, their importance, 95; *see* Ælfric, Æthelberht, Cynesige, Ecgberht, Ealdred, Oswald, Rodward, Wulfstan
Archill revolts against Tostig, 562, *note*
Armagh, Wikings at, 67, 74
Army, its re-organization under Ælfred, 136; under Æthelred and Eadric, 402
Arnulf, king of the East-Franks, his victory over the Wikings at the Dyle, 170
Arnulf, count of Flanders, son of Baldwin and Ælfthryth, 251; takes Montreuil, 267; his attack on Ponthieu supported by Æthelstan, *ib.*; his war with William Longsword, *ib.*; his alliance with Æthelstan and Lewis against the Normans, *ib.*; joins Hugh and William against Lewis, 268; gives a refuge at Ghent to Dunstan, 309; introduces the weaving trade into Flanders, 512
Ashdown, battle of, 103; Danish leaders slain at, *ib.*, 98 and *note* 1
Assandun, battle of, 417; great

nobles slain at, *ib.*, 420; Eadric charged with desertion at, 418; Cnut builds a church at, 434, 578; Stigand priest of, 545, 578
Asser, authority of his work, 99; his visit to Ælfred, 158-159
Athelney, Ælfred encamps at, 110; his jewel found at, *ib.*; Ælfred founds a monastery at, 133, 177; John the Old-Saxon made abbot of, 158, 178; a scholar of "Pagan" race at, 176 and *note* 4; difficulty of obtaining English monks for it, 177 and *note* 1; settlement of strangers at, 178 and *note;* failure of the scheme, *ib.*
Aylesford, reconciliation of Eadmund and Eadric at, 417

B

Bæda, Ælfred's translation of, 162, 164 and *note* 3, 167 and *note* 1
Badulf, last English bishop of Whithern, 275, *note* 3
Bagsecg, king of Bernicia, joins Guthrum's attack on Wessex, 98; slain at Ashdown, *ib. note* 1, 103
Bakewell fortified by Eadward the Elder, 214
Baldwin Iron-arm, count of Flanders, his marriage, 183
Baldwin II., count of Flanders, his marriage with Ælfred's daughter Ælfthryth, 183, 249
Baldwin (III.) of Mons, 512
Baldwin (IV.) the Bearded, restored to power by Robert the Devil, 474; marries a daughter of Richard the Good, 516
Baldwin (V.) of Lille, marries the sister of King Henry of France, 513, 516; revolts against the Emperor, 516; William's proposed alliance with, 516-517; its policy, 518; his alliance with Godwine, *ib.*; excommunicated by Leo IX., 519; perseveres in his rebellion, 521; submits, 522; renews his alliance with Godwine, *ib.*; shelters Godwine and his sons, 529; sends embassies to Eadward in Godwine's behalf, 533
"Baldwin's Land," name given to Flanders, 484, 517
Baldwin, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 546, 547; a monk of St. Denis, 547; his skill in medicine, *ib.*; prior of Deerhurst, *ib.*; made abbot of St. Edmundsbury, *ib.*
Ballads, English, preserved by William of Malmesbury, 297, *note* 1
Bamborough sacked by the Norwegians, 378
Barking, church of All Hallows at, 456, *note* 1, 464; Erkenwald dies at, 455; nuns of, their struggle with the Londoners for his remains, *ib.*
Barton, manor of, its connexion with Bristol, 444, *note*
"Basileus," style of Æthelstan, 241
Basing, the Danes checked at, 104
Bath, Eadgar crowned at, 351; submission of Western Wessex to Swein at, 411
Battle Abbey, site of Harold's standard marked by its high altar, 572
Bayeux, capital of the Bessin, 246; attacked by the Bretons, 250 gathering of the rebel Norman barons at, 506; Odo, bishop of, *see* Odo
Beaduheard, the king's reeve at Dorchester, slain by the Wikings, 51
Bec-Herlouin, its situation, 245; Lanfranc at, 504; fame of its school, 504-505
Bedford, its chief men submit to Eadward the Elder, 203, 211; taken and fortified by Eadward, 204; attacked by the Danes, 205; by Thurkill, 408
Bedfordshire, its origin, 237; included in the East-Anglian ealdormanry, 261, *note* 1
Benedict, anti-pope, gives the pallium to Stigand, 579
Benet, St., church in London dedicated to him, 454, 455 and *note* 3

Beorhtwulf, king of Mercia, defeated by the Wikings, 79
Beorn, son of Ulf, his presence in England, 487; made earl of the Middle-English, 500; extent of his earldom, *ib.*; opposes Swein's demands for restoration, 523; consents to act as mediator for Swein, *ib.*; murdered, *ib.*
Beowulf, song of, 53
Berkshire, its fyrd defeats the Wikings, 86; the Danes in, 98; meaning of the name, *ib.* and *note* 3; character of the country, 98, 99; raids of Hasting upon, 171; earliest dependency of Wessex, 233; detached from Wessex and joined with Hereford, &c., under Swein, 500
Bernicia ravaged by Halfdene, 106; remains an English state, 184; its alliance with Ælfred, *ib.*; rising of its people against Æthelstan, 253; Oswulf high-reeve of, 293; united with Deira under Oswulf, *ib.*; under Waltheof, 354; under Uhtred, 399; under Siward, 495; its independence of the Danelaw, 470; its northern part becomes Scottish, 471; *see* Northumbria
Bessin, the, granted to Hrolf, 246; wrested by the Normans from the Bretons, 250; stronghold of heathendom in Normandy, 388; Richard the Fearless reared there, *ib.*; its revolt against William, 505
Beverley, Æthelstan's grants to, 222 and *note* 2
Bible, Ælfric's translation of, 340
Billingsgate, 463, 464
Biorn, son of Harald Fair-hair, 118; called "the merchant," *ib.*, 448, *note* 3; king of Westfold, 448, *note* 3: slain by his brother Eric, 263
Bishops, English, their national character, 71; their relation to the Crown and the ealdormen, 305, 347; growth of their political importance, *ib.*, 348; appointed by the Crown, 348, 524; usually promoted from the Royal Chapel, 430
Bishopsgate, its site, 460
Bishopshill (York), churches of St. Mary in, 452; remains of Roman work in, *ib.*
"Bishop's shire," old name for a diocese, 231
Boethius, Ælfred's translation of, 162, 164, 168
Bokings, their "ham" in the upper valley of the Ouse (Buckingham), 203
Bolleit, Æthelstan defeats the Cornwealas at, 221
"Boors," 330
Bordeaux conquered by the Wikings, 77
Boston, its rise and growth, 450
Botulf, St., abbey of, the town of Boston grows up round it, 450; church in London dedicated to him, 464
Boulogne, Charles the Great at, 64; muster of a Wiking fleet at, 170; counts of, *see* Eustace
Brentford, Danes defeated at, 416
Bretons, the, attack Normandy, 250; repulsed, 251
Brice's day, St., massacre of the Danes on, 396
Bridgenorth, Danes encamp at, 174; fortified by Æthelflæd, 198
Bridges, their construction imposed as a penance, 337
Brihtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, 316, *note* 1; marries Ælflæd, daughter of Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex, and succeeds his father-in-law, 261; supports the cause of the monks, 352; slain at Maldon, 370
Brihtnoth, brother of Eadric, 407, *note* 1
Brionne, home of Herlouin, 504; counts of, their descent from Gunnor, 390
Bristol, its rise, 443-444; its mint, 444; its condition under Eadward the Confessor, *ib.* and *note;* its feorm, *ib. note;* its slave-trade with Ireland, 444-445; Harold and Leofwine sail to Dublin from, 529
Britain, character of its population

in Ecgberht's day, 2; mixture of races in, 3; character of the country, 4; progress of cultivation in, 4-5; industrial life, 6-7; first appearance of the Wikings in, 50-51; importance of its conquest to the Wikings, 86; first appearance of the Danes in, 87, 91; concentration of the Wiking forces on, 107
Britons, *see* Cumbria, Strath-Clyde, Welsh
Brittany, claim of the Norman dukes to supremacy over, 250; influence of Æthelstan over, 251; he makes its peace with Normandy, 266; subdued by Robert the Devil, 474; dukes of, *see* Alan
Bruges, its trade, 517; Harthacnut's invasion planned at, 518; Swein, son of Godwine, takes refuge at, 501; Ealdred bishop of Worcester at, 523; Godwine at, 532
Brunanburh, battle of, 254; authorities for, *ib.* and *note* 1; its importance, 256
Brytenwealda, style of Æthelstan, 241 and *note* 4
Bryhtferth, ealdorman, 316, *note* 1
Buckingham, southernmost of the Danish settlements in Mid-Britain, 203; held by Jarl Thurcytel, *ib.*; taken and fortified by Eadward the Elder, *ib.*
Buckinghamshire, its origin, 237; overrun by Thurkill, 408; joined with Essex, &c., under Leofwine, 565
Bucklersbury, site of the port of London, 456
Budget, Ælfred's, 181, 182
Bull How, 277
Burhred, king of Mercia, conquers Anglesea, 80; marries Ælfred's sister, 101; death at Rome, 106
Burislaf, king of the Wends, 367
Búr-thegn, 542
Butler, *see* Cup-thegn
Butsecarls of Hastings, 532, *note* 2; of Sandwich, 446 and *note* 1
Buttermere, 277
Buttington, battle of, 172
"By" in place-names, mark of Danish settlement, 116

C

Caen, council at, enacts the observance of the Truce of God, 490
Caithness, northmen in, 66, 107, 215; conquered by the Orkney Jarls, 558
Calne, witenagemot at, 353
Cambridge, the Danes at, 107; they submit to Eadward the Elder, 206, 211; lawmen at, 461, *note* 2
Cambridgeshire represents South Gyrwa-land, 236; forms part of the East Anglian ealdormanry, 261, *note* 1
Canterbury, its wealth and importance, 78; raid of the Wikings on, *ib.*; sacked by them, 79; mint at, 228; secular clerks at, 345; sacked by Thurkill, 409; the body of St. Ælfheah translated to, 433; Christ-church at, Cnut's grants to, 446 and *note* 2; archbishops of, their position, 71; supersede the West-Saxon bishops as national advisers of the Crown, 318; their relation to the Crown altered by the new system of administration, 430; *see* Ælfheah, Ælfric, Æthelm, Ceolnoth, Dunstan, Eadsige, Odo, Plegmund, Robert, Sigeric, Stigand, Theodore
Carham, battle of, 470
Carl, son of Thurbrand, 496, *note*
"Carl," Scandinavian form of "ceorl," 57
Carlisle destroyed by the Danes, 107; its unbroken life, 276
Carloman, king of the West Franks, defeats Guthrum at Saucourt, 148; his death, *ib.*
Cattle, the general medium of exchange in early ages, 227
Caupmanna-thorpe, settlement of Danish traders, 118, *note* 2
Ceadwalla, king of Wessex, his pilgrimage, baptism and death, 16, 17
Celchyth, *see* Chelsea
Cenwalch, king of Wessex, places the royal seat at Winchester, 232
Ceolnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, his alliance with Ecgberht, 73

Ceolwulf set up as king of Mercia by the Danes, 106, 121 and *note* 1
Ceorl, the English, 57; displaced by the thegn, 135, 330; gradually degraded into the villein, 360
Chancellor, office of, its origin, 493, *note*, 545; *see* Leofric, Reginbold, Wulfwig
Chancery, *see* Chapel
Chapel, the royal, its institution, 430, 431; its origin and growth, 542, 544; later developements from, 544; its composition in Cnut's day, 544, 545; Lotharingians in, *ib.*; its organization under Eadward, 493, *note*, 545, 546; Norman clerks in, 546
Chaplains, the king's, their administrative work, 430, 431
Chapmanslade, 118, *note* 2
Chapmen, 336; law of Ælfred concerning, 337; of Ine, *ib.*, *note* 1; first mention of, *ib.*
Charles the Bald, his alliance with Æthelwulf, 82; Ælfred at his court, 100; drives the northmen from Angers, 107
Charles the Fat defeats Hasting at Haslo, 148
Charles the Great, his meeting with Alcuin, 42; his wrath against the Northumbrians allayed by Alcuin's intercession, 43; his precautions against the northmen, 63, 64
Charles the Simple disputes the West-Frankish throne with Odo 243; grants to the northmen the territory between the mouth of the Seine and the Epte, 244; his alliance with Hrolf against the dukes of Paris, 246; marries a daughter of Eadward the Elder, 249; the crown claimed against him by Rudolf of Burgundy, *ib.*; renews his alliance with the Normans, *ib.*; his death, 250
Charmouth, battle of, 75
Cheap, East, its origin and growth, 458 and *note* 2; ward of, the oldest part of London, 456; its extent, *ib.*
Cheddar, Eadmund's hunting adventure in, 285
Chelsea (Celchyth), synod of, 335
Cherbury fortified by Æthelflæd, 202
Chertsey, monks of, 455
Cheshire, salt-mines in, 7 *note*; its origin as a shire, 236
Chester occupied by Hasting, 173; besieged by Æthelred, *ib.*; its importance, 194; "renewed" by Æthelred and Æthelflæd, *ib.* and *note* 2, 441; church of St. Werburgh at, 195; its growth, *ib.*, *note* 1; its trade 440; provision for its security, 442; traces of Danish settlement in, *ib.*; its lawmen, *ib.*; its churches, *ib.*; its market, 443; church of St. John without the walls, *ib.*; legend of Eadgar's triumph at, *ib.*, 324 *note* 1; character of its surrounding country, 442, 443; submits to William, 576
Chester-le-Street, Dunstan visits St. Cuthbert's shrine at, 294
Chesterford, battle of, 291
Chichester, mint at, 228
Chippenham, Danes at, 109; Asser's account of its situation, 233, *n.* 2
Chronicle, the English, its origin, 164-166 and *notes*; its growth under Ælfred, 166 and *note* 3, 167; its account of the reign of Eadward the Elder, 189, *note*; of the reign of Æthelstan, 218, *note* 2; chronological difficulties in, 191, *note* 4; poems in, 254, *note* 1; its character during the reigns of Eadward and Æthelstan, 296; its praise of Eadgar, 318, *note*, 319; Chronicle of Peterborough, 341, *note* 2; Abingdon, 370, *note* 2; Winchester, 164-166, 191, *note* 4, 218 and *note* 2; Worcester, 340, 341, 191, *note* 4
Chrism-loosing, 125, *note* 1
Christ-church, Canterbury, Cnut's grants to, 446 and *note* 2
Christianity, range of its influence, 8-9; its strife with heathenism, 9-11; it creates a new social class 12, 13; modifies township into

parish, 13-16; links England with Europe, 16-19; its effect on early law, 19-22; on jurisprudence, 22-24; on the feud, 24-28; on heathen literature, 338; on education, 339; on slavery, 334
Christina, daughter of the Ætheling Eadward, 556
Church, the English, its industrial work in Dorset, 6; its character after the Danish wars, 12; its condition in Northumbria, 41; its relations with the Mercian kings and with Ecgberht, 72; its alliance with the Monarchy, *ib.*, 318; its efforts in behalf of slaves, 334; Cnut's dealings with, 432-433; its reform under the Confessor, 514, 515
Churches, three classes of, 13; become the centres of village life, 15; their date indicated by their dedications, 438 and *note* 3; 441, *note*; 455, *note* 3; 465
Churchyard, the tunmoot held in the, 15
Clair-on-Epte, treaty of, 244
Cledauc, king of the North-Welsh, becomes subject to Eadward the Elder, 208, *note* 2
Clergy, the, new social class, 12; its rights, *ib.*; "regular" and "secular," 131, 345, 346; decline of discipline in the Danish wars, 346, 347
Cleveland, its settlement by the Danes, 116
Clifford's Tower, at York, marks the site of the Danish fortress, 450
Cluny, monastic reform at, its influence on England, 344
Cnichtengild at Aldgate, 464; its possible connexion with the older frithgild and the later merchant-gild, 461; at Nottingham, 440
Cnut, son of Swein, chosen king by the Danes at Gainsborough, 413; Æthelred marches against, *ib.*; mutilates English hostages, 420; returns to Denmark, 413; ravages the coast of Wessex, 414; joined by Eadric, 415; receives the submission of Wessex and Northumbria, *ib.*; lays siege to London, *ib.*; meets Eadmund on the borders of Wiltshire, 416; renews the siege of London, *ib.*; forsaken by Eadric, 417; causes Uhtred to be slain, *ib.*; gives his earldom to Eric, *ib.*, 420; defeats Eadmund at Assandun, 417; makes a treaty with Eadmund at Olney, 418; his age, 419; his temper, *ib.*; his character and that of his rule, 425-427; his dealings with the ealdormen, 420, 428; murders a brother of Eadmund and drives his children into Hungary, *ib.*; children of his first marriage, 421; marries Emma, *ib.*; contrasted with the earlier Danish conquerors, 423, 424; makes England his centre, 424; sets aside Danes for Englishmen, *ib.*; employs English soldiers and English priests in the north, *ib.*; banishes Thurkill and Eric, *ib.*; sets Hakon as ruler in Norway, *ib.*; sets Ulf as ruler in Denmark, *ib.*, 426; elected and crowned at London, 425; renews Eadgar's laws, *ib.*; dismisses his Danish fleet and host, *ib.*; his hus-carls, *ib.*, 432; visits Denmark, 425; date of his accession to its throne, *ib. note*; his laws, 426; organization of England under him, *ib.*; makes Eadwulf earl of Northumbria, 427; makes Wessex an earldom under Godwine, *ib.*; makes Godwine his vice-gerent, *ib.*; changes the ealdormanries into earldoms, 428; continues Æthelred's administrative policy, 428, 429; his dealings with the Church, 432-433; his character in English tradition, 434; in the Sagas, *ib.*; tradition of his visit to Ely, *ib.*; peace of his reign, 434-435; his letter to his English people, 436; his prohibition of the slave-trade, 445; Norway revolts against him, 466; leaves Harthacnut ruler in Denmark, 467; goes to Rome, *ib.*; secures the safety of the Alpine passes,

ib.; his meeting with the Emperor Conrad, 468; regains the land won from Denmark by Otto II., *ib.*; betroths his daughter to Conrad's son, *ib.*; drives Olaf out of Norway, *ib.*; suppresses a Welsh rising, 469; Malcolm of Scotland submits to him, 471; grants Lothian to Malcolm, *ib.*; his death, 476; break-up of his empire, 477; extinction of his house, *ib.*; permanence and stability of his administrative system, 493, *note*; his chaplains, 545
Codes, early English, 20, 21, *note* 1
Coin, its early use in Kent, 228; growing use of, 227-228, 329, *note*
Coinage the test of kingship, 144; Eadgar's coinage, 349, *note* 5
Coins, Anglo-Saxon, found at Delgany in Wicklow, 65, *note* 1; of Ælfred, 144, *note* 1; of Eadgar, struck at Dublin, 323; of Æthelred II. and Cnut, struck at Bristol, 443 and *note* 2
Colchester taken by the English, 205; rebuilt by Eadward the Elder, *ib.*; witenagemot at, 221, *note* 2; 224, *note* 2
Coldingham burnt by the Danes, 106
Commendation, growth of, 210
Conquest, the Danish, its significance, 52, 128-129; its causes, 359 and *note*; authorities and materials for its history, 370, *note* 2; difference between the earlier and the later, 422-424; its effect on English institutions, 428
Conquest, the Norman, 574-577
Constable, *see* Horse-thegn
Constantine, king of Scots, his struggle with Thorstein and Sigurd, 107; cedes Caithness to them, *ib.*; joins the Northern league against Eadward, 216; submits to Eadward, 217 and *note* 1; to Æthelstan, 220, 252 and *note* 4; his alliance with Olaf and the Ostmen, 252, 253; defeated at Brunanburh, 254, 255; retires to a monastery, 274
Constantinople, English refugees at, 574
Conrad, Emperor, his meeting with Cnut at Rome, 468; its results, *ib.*; betroths his son to Cnut's daughter, *ib.*
Copsige, Tostig's deputy in Northumbria, 562 *note*; seeks the Bernician earldom, *ib.*; expels Oswulf, *ib.*; slain, *ib.*
Corfe, Eadward the Martyr slain at, 355
Cork founded by the Wikings, 74
Cornhill, soke of the bishops of London, 462; church of St. Peter on, *ib.*
Cornwall, revolt of, against Ecgberht, 67; its final conquest, 220; early divisions of, 231; harried by Wikings, 382; bishop of, *see* Leofric
Coronation, its meaning and importance, 307, 308
Cotentin, the, conquered by William Longsword, 251; Æthelred II. repulsed in a descent on, 384; stronghold of heathendom in Normandy, 388; revolts against William the Conqueror, 506
Council, royal, first traces of its judicial authority, 140; its origin in the royal chapel, 431
Councils, Church, their canons against "heathendom" and witchcraft, 10, 11; become merged in the witenagemot, 348; *see* Caen, Chelsea, Rheims.
Court, the king's, its character, 30, 31; its means of subsistence, 31; its progresses, *ib.*, 32; its great officers, 180, 542
Cranborne, manor of, 332, 333
Crediton, bishops of, *see* Æthelgar, Leofric
Crowland sacked by Danes, 96
Crown, the, earliest known instance of an attempt to bequeath, 85, *note* 2; main bases of its power, 431; sources of its revenue, 403, 404, note 2; *see* King, Monarchy
Cuckamsly (Cwichelmslowe), Danes at, 400, 401

Cuerdale, coins of Ælfred found at, 144, *note* 1
Cumberland, its origin as a shire, 237, *note* 2; 277, *note* 3; Æthelred II. makes a descent on, 383; danger to England and Scotland from, *ib.* and *note* 4
Cumbria ravaged by Halfdene, 107 and *note* 1; its extent in the time of Eadmund, 274; its southern part called Westmoringa-land, *ib.*; character of country and people, 275, 276; the name replaces that of Strath-Clyde, 277; harried by Eadmund, 277, 278; granted to Malcolm king of Scots, 278; results of the grant, *ib.*, 469; kings of, their opposition to the West-Saxons, 277; *see* Oswine, Strath-Clyde
Cumbrians, their name transferred to the Britons of Strath-Clyde, 184; join the northern league against Æthelstan, 253
Cuthbert, St., wanderings of his relics during the Danish invasions, 93, 106
Cup-thegn or butler, his office, 542; held by Ælfred's grandfather, 180
Cwichelmslowe, *see* Cuckamsly
Cyneheard's Song-Book, 341
Cynesige, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 546; archbishop of York, *ib.*; consecrates Harold's church at Waltham, 580

D

"Dale" in place-names, mark of northern settlement, 116
Dalriada, the Scots of, subject to the Picts, 185; kings of, *see* Kenneth
Danegeld, the king's demesne exempt from, 404, *note* 2; the first national land-tax, 405 and *note* 1; its nominal origin, 431; continued as a regular land-tax, *ib.*; its amount in Cnut's first year, 465; resistance to it at Worcester under Harthacnut, 485; *see* Land-tax
Danelaw, the, 114-124; its relation to the North, 126; its results on English history, 128, 129; its weakness, 130; rises against Ælfred, 171; conquered by Eadward and Æthelflæd, 203-208; effect of its conquest on the character of the English kingship, 211; its bond of allegiance to Eadward, 212; its alliance with the Ostmen, 213; its peaceful submission to Æthelstan, 221; historical continuity of the districts in, 236; shires in, *ib.*; emigration from, into Normandy, 247; rises against Æthelstan, 253; against Eadmund, 270; reduced to submission, 274; its struggles with Eadred, 289-293; its isolation under Eadgar, 325; fusion of races in, 326, 327 and *notes*; absence of religious houses in, 342; joins Swein, 410
Danes, their early settlements on the isles of the Baltic, 53; effect of their attacks in arresting the consolidation of the English peoples under Ecgberht, 68; different uses of the name, 65, *note* 3, 68, *note*; their first appearance in Ireland, 76, *note* 2, 90; in Britain, 87, 361; their settlements in Sweden, Zeeland, and northern Jutland, 88 and *note* 1; character of their warfare, 88-90; earliest authority for their settlements, 88, *note* 1; their struggle with the Norwegian settlers in Ireland, 76, *note* 2, 90; winter in East-Anglia, 91; conquer Northumbria, 92: destroy its abbeys, 93; set up Ecgberht as under-king of Deira, 94 and *note* 2; winter at Nottingham, 94; attacked by Æthelred and Burhred, 95; winter at York, *ib.*; at Thetford, 96; conquer East-Anglia, *ib.*; put St. Eadmund to death, *ib.*; Mercia pays tribute to them, 96, 97; causes of their success, 97; attack Wessex, 98, 102; defeated at Ashdown, 103; march upon Hampshire, 104; their victory at Merton, *ib.*; bought off by Ælfred, withdraw from Wessex, 105 and *note* 2;

winter at London, *ib.*, *note* 2; return to Northumbria, 106; conquer Mercia, *ib.*; winter at Repton, *ib.*; division of their host, *ib.*; set up Ceolwulf as king of Mercia, *ib.* and *note* 2, 121 and *note* 1; seize Exeter, 108; driven from it by Ælfred, 109; overrun the Gwent, *ib.*; their settlements in Yorkshire, 116; their trading-port at Caupmanna-thorpe, 118 and *note* 2; their trade, 118, 119; their organization, 120, 122; divide Mercia, 121; marks of their settlement in its local names, *ib.* and *note* 2; their distribution in Mid-Britain, 121, 122; their settlements in Lincolnshire, 122, 123; in Leicestershire, 123; in East-Anglia, 123, 124; divide East-Anglia, 123; effect of their settlement on England, 128, 129; desertion of Englishmen to, 147, *note* 1; attack Frankland, 147, 148; beset Rochester, 148; repulsed by Ælfred, 149; plunder London and winter at Fulham, *ib.*; Frith between Ælfred and Guthrum, 152, 153; renewal of war with, 168, 171, 172; their alliance with the Welsh, 172; defeated by Eadward and Æthelred at Buttington, 172; driven back to Essex, 173; defeat an attack of the Londoners, *ib.*; their retreat cut off by Ælfred, *ib.*; break-up of their host, 174; their raid over Mercia repulsed by Eadward at Tottenhale, 195; attack Towcester, 204; Bedford, 205; defeated at Tempsford, Colchester, and Maldon, *ib.*; fusion with the English, 326, 327; union under Gorm the Old, 361, 362; attack Courland, 362; mercenaries take service with Æthelred II., 383; massacred by his order, 396; win Exeter, *ib.*; attack East-Anglia, 397; and plunder Thetford, *ib.*; their victory over Ulfcytel and the East-Angles, 398; held in check by Æthelred, 400; winter in Wight, *ib.*; march to Cuckamsly, *ib.*; return to Wight, 401; a truce bought with them, *ib.*, 406; defeat the East-Anglian fyrd under Ulfcytel, 407; again bought off, 408; sack Canterbury and seize Archbishop Ælfheah, 409; their withdrawal, *ib.*; choose Cnut for king at Gainsborough, 413; defeated at Brentford, 416; driven into Sheppey by Eadmund, 416, 417; set aside for Englishmen by Cnut, 424; impulse given by them to trade, 118, 119, 440; their trade in slaves, 444; their settlement at Chester, 442; Norwich, 449; York, 119, 452 and *note*; London, 465; in Frankland, 244, 245

"Dane-work," the, in Sleswick, 63

David's, St., Cnut sends army to, 469

Deerhurst, meeting of Eadmund and Cnut near, 418

Defnsætas, English settlers in Devon, 234

Deira, Danes settle in, 115; parted among them, *ib.*, 116; trade of the Danish settlers in, 118, 119; its organization under the Danes, 120; forms part of the Danelaw, 184; traces of its ancient divisions in the "shires" of modern Yorkshire, 231; its alliance with the Ostmen, 242; English fugitives from, 276; united with Bernicia under Oswulf, 293; under Waltheof, 354; under Uhtred, 399; under Siward, 495; kings of, their extinction, 39, *note* 1; *see* Northumbria, Yorkshire

Demesnes, royal, their share in taxation, 404, *note* 2

Dene, residence of Ælfred, 159

Denewulf, bishop of Winchester, 133

Denmark, kingdom of, its growth under Harald Blaatand, 290; physical character of the country, 361; kingdom of Gorm, 362; earliest accounts of, *ib.*, *note*; its capital at Lethra, *ib.*; introduction of Christianity, 365-366; becomes an under-kingdom of England, 424; ruled by Ulf, *ib.*, 426; by Harthacnut, 467; its

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bishoprics filled by Englishmen, 433; its frontier again extended to the Eider, 468; revolts against Cnut, *ib.*; claimed by Swein Estrithson, 487; its throne disputed between Swein and Magnus of Norway, 493; kings of, *see* Cnut, Gorm, Harald, Harthacnut, Swein

Derby (Deoraby), Danish name of Northweorthig, 122, 206; one of the Five Boroughs, *ib.*; taken by Æthelflæd, 207

Derbyshire, 236

Derwent, river, limit of Strath-Clyde in Eadmund's day, 277

Dermot, king of Dublin, shelters Harold and Leofwine, 529

Devon or Dyvnaint, the country of the Defnsætas, 234; formed into shire, 233, *note* 2; victory of its fyrd over the Wikings, 75; attacked by Hubba, 109, 111; Eadmund Ironside raises troops in, 416; bishops of, *see* Leofric; ealdormen of, 233, *note* 2

Dish-thegn or steward, his functions, 542

Domfront surrenders to William, 509

Dorchester, landing of Wikings at, 51

Dorchester, see of, 235; relations of the diocese to the Mercian kingdom and ealdormanry, 261, *note* 1; divided between the ealdormanries of East-Anglia and Essex, *ib.*; bishops of, *see* Ulf, Wulfwig

Dore, submission of the Northumbrians to Ecgberht at, 95 *note* 2, 217; of the northern league to Eadward at, 216

Dorsætan give their name to Dorset, 234

Dorset, progress of cultivation and industry in, 5, 6; hundreds in, *ib.*; settlement of the English in, 6; its industrial life, 6, 7; appears as shire, 233, *note* 2; victory of its fyrd over the Wikings, 75; invaded by Wikings from Ireland, 382; its feorm, 404, *note* 2; seaports in, 445, 446; ealdormen of, 233, *note* 2; *see* Æthelhelm

Dover, its early importance as a seaport, 78 and *note* 1, 446; the Ætheling Ælfred lands at, 482; Eustace of Boulogne at, 526; secured by William, 572

Drogo of Mantes marries Godgifu, daughter of Æthelred and Emma, 492

"Dubhgaill," their first appearance in Ireland, 76, *note* 2, 90; their struggle with the "Fin-Gaill," *ib.*

Dublin taken by the Wikings, 74 and *note* 2; occupied by Olaf the Fair, 90; becomes the centre of the Ostmen, *ib.*; Olaf Sihtric's son and Guthferth take refuge at, 242; coins of Eadgar minted at, 323; Harold and Leofwine take refuge at, 529; Harold gathers ships at, 532; kings of, *see* Dermot, Olaf, Sihtric

Duduc, chaplain to Cnut, 545; his foreign birth, *ib.*, 520; bishop of Wells, 545, 546; at the Council of Rheims, 520

Dues, customary, 330, 331

Dumfriesshire, northern limit of the Norwegian settlements in Cumbria, 276

Duncan, king of Scots, defeated in a raid upon Durham, 558; slain, *ib.*, 493; his sons take refuge with Siward, 558; his kinship with the Northumbrian earls, 559 *note*

Dunstan, St., authorities for his life, 281, *note*; son of Heorstan, 282; description of, *ib.*; date of his birth, *ib.*, *n.* 3; his youth at Glastonbury, 282, 283; goes to court, *ib.*; twice driven thence, 284; becomes a monk, *ib.*; his temper, *ib.*; life at Glastonbury, 284, 285; returns to court, 285; made abbot of Glastonbury, *ib.* and *note* 2; his friendship with Eadred, 285, 286; with Eadred's mother and with Æthelstan of East-Anglia, 286, 306 and *note* 2; becomes Eadred's chief adviser, 287; accompanies him into Northumbria, 293, 294; his office under Eadred, 294; in charge of the hoard, *ib.*, 299; his educational work, 294, 295;

buries Eadred, 300; at Eadwig's coronation-feast, 308; outlawed, 309; takes refuge at Ghent, *ib.* and *note*; recalled by Eadgar, 314; bishop of Worcester and of London, *ib.*; consecrated by Odo, *ib.*, *note* 3; archbishop of Canterbury, 317 and *note* 2; Eadgar's chief counsellor, *ib.*; his policy, *ib.*; his share in the government, 318; his civil administration, 319; intellectual revival under him, 340; his attitude towards the monastic revival, 345 and *note*; his policy of fusion between Church and State, 347, 348; crowns Eadgar, 351; supports Eadward, 353; his motives, 354; crowns Æthelred, 356 and *note* 1; withdraws from court, 356; his quarrel with Æthelred, 357, 358; his death, 358; his anniversary instituted by Cnut, 433; church in London dedicated to him, 464

Dunstan, son of Æthelnoth, revolts against Tostig, 562, *note*

Dunwich, 449

Durham, the Scots defeated at, 399, 470, 558; bishops of, *see* Ealdhun; its origin as a shire, 237, *note* 2

Dyddenham, labour-roll of, 331, 332

Dyvnaint, *see* Devon

E

Eadberht, king of Northumbria, withdraws to a cloister, 40; extent of Northumbrian supremacy under, 275

Eadgar, son of Eadmund, 286; first king of all England, 48; withdraws from Eadwig's court, 311 and *note* 2; chosen king by the Mercians, 312; joined by the Northumbrians and East-Angles, 313, *note*; division of the kingdom, 313, 314; his titles, 313, *note*, 314 and *note* 2; recalls Dunstan; 314; succeeds Eadwig as king in Wessex, 315; his counsellors, 316 and *note* 1; marries Ælfthryth, *ib.*, *note* 1, 320, 344; extension of the system of ealdormanries under him, 316; his alliance with the Primate and the Church, 317, 318; his work of Church restoration, 318; account of his reign in the monastic writers, *ib.*, *note*; in the Chronicle, 319; his person and temper, 319, 320; at Chester, 324, *note* 1, 443; ballads about him, 297, *note* 1; marries Æthelflæd the White, 320; character of his reign, 320-322; William of Malmesbury's account of, 320, *note* 2, 321, *note* 1; peace of his reign, 321-324; the Ostmen become his allies, 323; coins minted at Dublin, *ib.*; his relations with Wales, *ib.*, 324 and *note* 1; with the Scots, 324; with the Danelaw, 325; cedes Edinburgh to the Scots, *ib.*; possibly grants Lothian to them, 470; Danes in his service, 327; love of foreigners, 328; English society under, *ib. et seq.*; his alliance with Otto the Great, 328, *note* 3; his zeal for monasticism, 344, 345; extent of his direct government, 348; materials and authorities for his reign, 349, *note* 1; the "Hundred" first appears by name under him, *ib.*, *note* 3; his new coinage, *ib.*, *note* 5; his crowning, 351; his laws, 327, 349; ravages Thanet, 350; his royal progresses, *ib.*; his fleet, *ib.*; his death, 351, 352; his children, 352; names his successor, *ib.*; trade of London under him, 463; his patronage of the Flemings, 518; his laws renewed by Cnut, 425, 426

Eadgar, son of the Ætheling Eadward, 556; chosen king, 572 submits to William, 573; takes refuge in Scotland, 574; joins the Northumbrian revolt, 575; returns to Scotland, 576

Eadgifu, third wife of Eadward the Elder, and mother of Eadmund and Eadred, 269 and *note* 1; her alliance with Dunstan, 286, 306, and *note* 2; with Æthelstan of

East-Anglia, 306 and *note* 2; prevents Æthelwold from going over sea, 295, *note* 2; driven from court, 306 and *note* 5; returns, 315 and *note* 2

Eadgifu, daughter of Eadward the Elder, married to Charles the Simple, 249; takes refuge in England, 265; recalled by Lewis, 266

Eadgyth, daughter of Eadward the Elder, marries Otto the German, 249

Eadgyth, daughter of Godwine, marries Eadward the Confessor, 500; sent to a monastery, 530; brought back, 535; surrenders Winchester to William, 572

Eadhild, daughter of Eadward the Elder, marries Hugh the Great, 250

Eadmund, St., king of East-Anglia, martyred by the Danes, 96; his life written by Abbo of Fleury, 340; abbey built over his relics, 96; refounded by Cnut, 433

Eadmund, son of Eadward the Elder, at Brunanburh, 254; marries Æthelflæd, 261; succeeds Æthelstan as king, 269; his policy, *ib.*; his royal style, *ib.*, *note* 2; his struggle with the Danelaw, 271, 272; drives out Olaf and Ragnald, 274 and *note* 1; harries Cumberland, 277; grants it to Malcolm, 278; his hunting adventure at Cheddar, 285; receives ambassadors from Otto, *ib.* and *note* 1; his alliance with Lewis, 280; his death, 280, 281; buried at Glastonbury, 300; his children, 286; his reform of the law of feud, 27, 278, 279

Eadmund, son of Æthelred II., called Ironside, 417; sent to England with pledges from Æthelred, 413; dissensions with Eadric, 414; his marriage, *ib.*; opposes Cnut, 415; falls back on Northumbria, *ib.*; joins Æthelred in London, *ib.*; crowned king there, 416; raises forces in Somerset and Devon, *ib.*; meets Cnut in Wiltshire, *ib.*; relieves London, *ib.*; defeats the Danes at Brentford, *ib.*; returns to the west, *ib.*; drives the Danes into Sheppey, 416, 417; joined by Eadric and the Mercians, 417; by Ulfcytel and the East-Anglians, *ib.*; defeated at Assandun, *ib.*; treaty of Olney, 418; his death and burial, *ib.*; Cnut's pilgrimage to his tomb, 433; his sons, 472; they fly to Hungary, 420, 556

Eadmund, ealdorman, 311, *note* 2, 316, *note* 1

Eadred, son of Eadward the Elder and Eadgifu, 269, *note* 1; his friendship with Dunstan, 285, 286; succeeds Eadmund, 286; Dunstan his chief adviser, 287; his crowning at Kingston, 287, 288; his proclamation, 287 and *note* 2; his royal style, *ib.*, 288 and *note* 2, 299; the Scots renew their alliance with, 289; oath of allegiance from Northumbria, *ib.*; authority for his reign, 289, *note* 4; his ill-health, 290, 299; subdues Northumbria, 291; final submission of the Danelaw to, 293; reduces Northumbria to an earldom, *ib.*; his witenagemots, 298; peace of his last years, *ib.*; meets the Northumbrian chiefs at Abingdon, *ib.*, *note*; his imperial claims, 288, 299; sends envoys to Otto, 299, *note* 1; falls sick at Frome, 299: his death and burial, 300

Eadric and Hlothere, laws of, 21, *notes* 1 and 3

Eadric succeeds Wulfgeat as High Reeve, 399; his vigorous policy, 400; charges against him, *ib.*; his surname of "Streona," *ib.*, *note*; made ealdorman of Mercia, 401: marries a daughter of Æthelred II., *ib.*; his policy, 400; his re-organization of the army and the fleet, 402, 403; hinders an engagement with Thurkill, 407; falls back into Mercia, 408; his ealdormanry called "Myrcenarice," *ib.*; ravages the Welsh coast, 409; slays two chief thegns of the

Seven Boroughs, 414; heads the host against Cnut, *ib.*; his quarrel with Eadmund, *ib.*; joins Cnut, 415; accompanies him to the siege of London, *ib.*; rejoins Eadmund, 417; charged with desertion at Assandun, 418; mediates between Eadmund and Cnut, *ib.*; slain, 420

Eadsige made archbishop of Canterbury, 545; his death, 524

Eadward the Elder, son of Ælfred, 171: his education, 157, *note* 2, 190 and *note* 2; attacks the Wikings' camp in Essex, 172; defeats them at Buttington, *ib.*; his temper, 190; his accession, 191; authorities for his reign, 198, *note*, 191, *note* 4; his victory over Æthelwald, 191; renews the Frith of Wedmore, *ib.*; union of Wessex and Mercia under him, 192; his change in the royal style, *ib.* and *note*; repulses the Danes at Tottenhale, 195; harries the Danelaw, *ib.*; musters a fleet in the Channel, 196; takes the lower valley of the Thames from Mercia and annexes it to Wessex, 197; founds Hertford, *ib.*; annexes southern Essex, 198; rebuilds Colchester, 205; the Danes of East-Anglia, Essex, and Cambridge submit to him, 205, 206; takes Buckingham, 203; Bedford, Towcester, and Northampton, 204; Huntingdon, 205; Stamford, 206; Nottingham and Lincoln, 208; fortifies Witham, 198; Buckingham, 203; Bedford, Towcester, Maldon, and Wigmore, 204; Huntingdon and Colchester, 205; Stamford, 206; Nottingham, 208; Thelwell, Manchester, and Bakewell, 214; takes Mercia into his own hands, 208; the North-Welsh brought under his direct government, *ib.* and *note* 2; receives oaths of allegiance from English and Danes, 211, 212; builds a bridge at Nottingham, 214, 439; league of the North against, 216; its submission, 217 and *note* 1; his death, 217; marriages of his daughters, 249, 250; children of his three marriages, 269, *note* 1; his law against witchcraft, 10

Eadward the Martyr, son of Eadgar and Æthelflæd, 320; named by Eadgar as his successor, 352; his claim to the Crown supported by Ælfhere, *ib.*; by Dunstan and Oswald, 353; his crowning, *ib.*; opposition to, 354; slain, 355; buried at Wareham, 356; counted a martyr, *ib.*; buried at Shaftesbury, 357; succession of the ealdormen under him, 372, *note*; his anniversary instituted by Cnut, 433

Eadward the Confessor, son of Æthelred and Emma, his Norman education, 412; makes a descent at Southampton, 480; summoned by Harthacnut and recognized as heir to the throne, 485; his title of Confessor, *ib.*; his personal appearance, 486; his Norman sympathies, *ib.*; returns to Normandy, *ib.*; crowned at Winchester, 487; chosen king by the English people, 488; his alleged promise to Swein Estrithson, 489; unwillingness to accept the crown, 491; his Norman followers, 492; his political position, 495; growth of administration under him, 493, *note*; his use of a seal, *ib.*; his position in Wessex, 499; makes his home at Westminster, *ib.*; re-distribution of the earldoms under him, 500; marries Eadgyth, *ib.*; influence of his Norman counsellors, 501; gathers a fleet at Sandwich to support the Emperor against Flanders, 522; opposes Ælfric's election to Canterbury and appoints Robert of Jumièges, 525; orders Godwine to punish the citizens of Dover, 527; refuses to give up Eustace, 528; his measures after Godwine's flight, 530; visited by William, 531; his alleged promises of the crown to William, 491, 531 and

note; gathers a fleet and army to meet Godwine, 533; his Norman counsellors outlawed, 534, 535; his court after Godwine's return, 536; his reorganization of the chancery, 547; his chaplains, 545, 546; his relations with Godwine's sons, 554; calls home the Æthelling Eadward, 556; sends Siward to make war on Macbeth, 559; sends Gisa of Wells to Rome for consecration, 580; his death, 568, 581

Eadward, son of Eadmund Ironside, finds shelter in Hungary, 556; called home by the Confessor, *ib.*; his death, 565

Eadwine, earl of Mercia, 567; submits to William, 573, 574; revolts against William, 576; slain, *ib.*

Eadwig, son of Eadmund, 286; succeeds Eadred as king, 305 and *note;* changes his counsellors, 306 and *note* 6; influenced by Æthelgifu against Dunstan, 307; date of his coronation, 307, *note* 2; the coronation-feast, 308; sentences Dunstan to outlawry, 309; revives the Mercian ealdormanry in favour of Ælfhere, *ib.*; marries Ælfgifu, 311; his marriage denounced, *ib.*; his kindred withdraw from court, *ib.* and *note* 2; separated from his wife by sentence of Archbishop Odo, 312; supported by Æthelwold and the West-Saxon clergy, *ib.*, *note* 2; his benefactions to Abingdon, *ib.*; revolt against him, 312; its date, *ib.*, *note* 2; misrepresentations of its origin, *ib.*; authorities for its history, 313, *note;* division of the realm between him and Eadgar, 313, 314 and *note* 1; submits to the archbishop's sentence, 315; his death, *ib.*

Eadwulf of Bamborough, ruler of Bernicia, his alliance with Ælfred, 184 and *note*

Eadwulf, brother of Uhtred, made earl of Northumbria, 427; slain in battle with the Scots at Carham, 470

Eadwulf, son of Uhtred, succeeds Ealdred as earl of Bernicia, 495, 496, *note;* slain by Siward, *ib.*

Eadhelm, St., bishop of Sherborne, his foundations in Dorset, 6; his diocese called "Selwoodshire," 231, *note*

Ealdhun, bishop of Durham, his daughter marries Earl Uhtred, 496, *note*

Ealdormanries, the great, originated by Ælfred, 258; danger of the measure, *ib.*; suppressed by Eadward, *ib.*; revived by Æthelstan and his successors, 259; limitations of the system, *ib.*; extended to Wessex, 315, 316; policy of Æthelred and Cnut towards them, 428; changed into earldoms, *ib.*; *see* Anglia (East-), Essex, Mercia, Northumbria, Wessex

Ealdormen become delegates of the king, 34; their distribution in Mercia, 45, 238; in Wessex, 47, 70, 238; title of ealdorman given to the head of a frith-gild, 460

Ealdormen, the great, how appointed, 259; their royal blood, *ib.*; danger of the arrangement, 260; growth of their power, 304; checks upon it, 305; their claims upon Eadgar, 315; their order in the charters, 316, *note;* their power over the Crown, 348, 349, 357; their succession under Eadward the Martyr, 372, *note;* Æthelred's policy towards, 373-374; their number and order after Æthelwine's death, 393, 394, 399; Cnut's treatment of, 420; changed into earls, 428

Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, visits the court of Bruges, 523; brings Swein home, 524; fails to overtake Harold in his flight, 529; sent to call home the Ætheling Eadward, 556; as archbishop of York, receives the Pope's Legates, 580; consecrates Wulfstan, *ib.*; crowns Harold, 581; crowns William, 573

Ealdred of Bernicia, son of Eadwulf,

his friendship with Eadward the Elder, 184, *note;* joins the northern league against him, 216; submits to him, 217, *note* 1; to Æthelstan, 220; stirs up a rising of the Danelaw, 252
Ealdred, son of Uhtred, becomes earl of Northumbria, 496, *note;* his feud with Carl, *ib.*; murdered, *ib.*; his daughter marries Siward, *ib.*, 495; his death avenged by Waltheof, 496, *note*
Ealdred, a descendant of Earl Uhtred, revolts against Tostig, 562
Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, 73; his victory over the Wikings, 75; supports Æthelbald against Æthelwulf, 83
Eamot, submission of the Scots, Danes, and Welsh at, 220
Eardulf, bishop of Lindisfarne, driven out by Halfdene, 106
Eardwulf, king of Northumbria, succeeds Æthelred, 43; his death, *ib.*
Earldoms, ealdormanries changed into, 428; their distribution under Harthacnut, 498; under Eadward and Godwine, 500; on Godwine's fall, 530; on his return, 536, 537; under Harold, 557; *see* Anglia (East-), Hereford, Hwiccas, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria, Wessex
Earls substituted for ealdormen by Cnut, 428
Earth-goddess, prayer to the, 12
"Eastern Kingdom," its extent and relation to Wessex, 69; *see* Kent
Ebbe, St., church at Oxford dedicated to, 438; date of her martyrdom, *ib.*, *note* 3
Ecgberht, England under, 1-49; not a king of England, 47; relation of the other kings to, 48; deposes and restores Wiglaf of Mercia, 48, 49; rising of the West-Welsh against, 67; defeats them at Hengestdun, *ib.*; his efforts after a national sovereignty, 68; organization of Wessex under, 47, 68-70; his claim to be hereditary king of Kent, 69; sets his eldest son over Kent, *ib.* and *note;* alliance with the Church, 72, 73; owned as overlord by the Northumbrians at Dore, 95, *note* 2; his conquest of London, 150; the complete shire-organization of Wessex probably dates from his day, 233
Ecgberht, king of Deira under the Danes, 94, *note* 2, 115; driven out, 115
Ecgberht, archbishop of York, his regulations concerning slavery, 334
Ecgberht's-stone, Ælfred musters the West-Saxon host at, 111
Ecwils, king of Northumbria, 196
Eddisbury, Æthelflæd at, 202
Edinburgh becomes Scottish, 324, 470
Edington, battle of, 111
Egil Scallogrimson, Saga of, 223; its account of the battle of Brunanburh, 254, *note* 1
Eider, river, frontier of Denmark and Germany, 468
Eildon Hills, Æthelwold Moll's victory at, 40
Elfege, bishop of Winchester, kinsman of Dunstan, 282, *note* 1
Elmham, bishops of, *see* Æthelmær, Stigand
Ely sacked by Ivar and Hubba, 97; Cnut's gifts to, 433; tradition of his visit to, 434; the Ætheling Ælfred dies at, 482; surrenders to William, 577
Emma, daughter of Richard the Fearless, her marriage with Æthelred II., 386, 393; its effects, 392, 393; takes refuge in Normandy, 411; left there on Æthelred's return, 413; marries Cnut, 421; supports Harthacnut's claim to England, 479; remains at Winchester with the hus-carls, 480, 481; robbed of Cnut's treasure by Harald, 481 driven from the realm, 483; her friendship with Stigand, 578; her property seized, *ib.*; takes refuge in Flanders, 484; supports Harthacnut, *ib.*
"Emperor," style of Æthelstan, 241; of Eadred, 288, *note* 2, 299

Emperors, *see* Charles, Conrad, Henry, Lewis, Otto
Empire, the, its revival under Otto, 513; limits of its supremacy, *ib.*; its relations with the Church, 515
Engle, Middle-, their land about Leicester, one of the five regions of the Mercian kingdom, 235; represented by Leicestershire, *ib.*, 236; later earldom, 498
Engle, North-, represented by Nottinghamshire, 236
Engle, South-, their land about Dorchester, one of the five regions of the Mercian kingdom, 235; represented by Northamptonshire, 236
Engle-land, the original, settled by Scandinavian peoples, 62 and *note*, 179; known in the ninth century as South Jutland, 62
Ennerdale, 277
Eric Bloody-axe, son and successor of Harold Fair-hair, 262; his character, *ib.*; his marriage with Gunhild, *ib.*, 263; his early adventures, 263; chosen by Harald as his successor, *ib.*; slays his brothers Rognwald and Biorn, *ib.*; baptized, and set over Northumbria by Æthelstan, 264; his Wiking life, *ib.*; threatened with deposition by Eadmund, quits Northumbria, 270
Eric Hiring, son of Harald Blaatand, received by the Northumbrians as their king, 290 and *note*; driven out, 291; returns, 292; driven out again, 293; his death, 292, *note* 2; account of him in the Saga of Hakon the Good, 293, *note* 1
Eric, king of Sweden, drives Swein from Denmark, 368, 369; his death, 384
Eric, son of Jarl Hakon, joins Swein and the Swedes in attacking Olaf Tryggvason, 385; made earl of Northumbria by Cnut, 417, 420; brother-in-law of Cnut, 424; banished, *ib.*
Erkenwald, St., bishop of London, 455 and *note* 2; rise of parishes in London during his episcopate, *ib.* and *note* 3; founds the monastery at Barking, 456, *note* 1; dies there, 455; struggle for the possession of his remains, *ib.*
Essex forms part of the "Eastern Kingdom," 69; its extent, 149; reunited to East-Anglia under Guthrum, 124, 149, 150; its division at the frith between Ælfred and Guthrum, 151, 152; its western half formed into a separate district round London, *ib.*; its southern part annexed by Eadward the Elder, 198; the Danes of, submit to Eadward, 205; becomes a shire of the West-Saxon realm, 234; joined with Middlesex, &c., under Leofwine, 565; ealdormanry of, its creation, 261; its extent, *ib.* and *note* 1; ealdormen of, 261; their alliance with those of East-Anglia, *ib.*, 262; *see* Ælfgar, Brihtnoth, Leofsige
Estrith, sister of Cnut, her marriage with Ulf, 426; its date, *ib.*, *note*
Ethandun, *see* Edington
Eu, counts of, their descent from Gunnor, 390
Eugenius, under-king of the North-Welsh, 224, *note* 1
Eustace, count of Boulogne, marries Godgifu, daughter of Æthelred II., 519; excommunicated by the council of Rheims, 520; visits Eadward, 526; quarrel of his followers with the townsfolk of Dover, 526-527; his surrender demanded by Godwine, 527; refused, 528; called by the Kentishmen to aid them against Odo of Bayeux, 574
Evesham, council of, 402, *note* 2
Exchequer, origin of, 493, *note*; *see* Hoard
Exeter seized by the Danes, 108; regained by Ælfred, 109; defended by him against the Wikings, 172; Æthelstan expels the Britons from, 220; witenagemots at, 225 and *note* 1, 227; mint at, 228; Emma's dowry-town, 396; Swein lands at, *ib.*; surrendered to Swein, *ib.*; its situation, 445; submits to William, 574; be-

sieged by the English, 575; relieved by William Fitz-Osbern, *ib.*

F

Falaise, birth of William the Conqueror at, 475; William escapes thither from the revolt of the Cotentin, 506
Fearndun, death of Eadward the Elder at, 217
Feorm-fultum, 404, *note* 2
Feud, right of, the original groundwork of national justice, 22; its nature and limits, 22-27; its regulation under Eadmund, 27, 278, 279
Feudalism, its growth in England, 301, 302, 360, 361
Feversham, witenagemot at, 225 and *note* 1
Finance, Æthelred's system of, 404, *note* 2, 431
"Fin-gaill," their struggle with the "Dubh-gaill," 76, *note* 2, 90
Fisheries in the Severn, 440; in the Wye, *ib.*, *note;* on the south coast, 445-447; in the German Sea, 447; their importance, 448
Fitz-Osbern, house of, 390
Five Boroughs, their organization, 122; first occurrence of the name, *ib.*, *note;* conquered by Æthelflæd and Eadward, 206-208; rise against Eadmund, 270; submit to Swein, 410
Flanders, its rise and growth, 511; character of its people, *ib.*; of its counts, *ib.*; their encouragement of its freedom and trade, 512; rise of its towns, *ib.*; its relations with France and with the Empire, 512, 513; with Normandy, 516; with England, 182, 183, 517, 518; revolts against the Emperor, 516; refuge of Dunstan, 309 and *note;* of Emma, 484; of Godwine and his sons, 529; of Swein, 501, 523; of Tostig, 567; called "Baldwin's land," 484, 517; counts of, *see* Arnulf, Baldwin, Lyderic.
Fleet created by Ælfred, 138 and *note* 2; its importance at the siege of Exeter, *ib.*; repulses the Danes, 148; its organization under Eadgar, 350; its decay under Æthelred, 374, 383, 402; he engages Danes to man it, 383: reorganized by Æthelred and Eadric, 403
Fleury, English clerks sent to learn the Benedictine rule at, 343, *note* 2, 344
Florence of Worcester, his translation of the Chronicle, 341, *note;* character and composition of his work, 381, *note* 2, 398, *note* 2
Folks, the early, their consolidation into larger kingdoms, 143; its results, 33-39
"Folk-frith," 23
Folk-moot, the, its judicial character and process, 24, 25; difficulty of enforcing its dooms, 29, 140, 141, *note* 1; dies down into the shire-moot, 36
"Folk's justice," 28; passes into the "king's justice," 29, 30
"Ford" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
"Foss" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Fosse Way, 201, 202
"Fourfold Realm," the, 287, *note* 2, 288 and *note* 2
Fræna, Jarl, joins Guthrum, 98; slain at Ashdown, *ib.*, *note* 1
France, its relations with Normandy and Anjou, 508; kings of, *see* Henry; *see also* Frankland (West)
Frankland, East, *see* Germany
Frankland, West, the Wikings in, 76, 77, 147, 148, 170; settlement of Hrolf in, 244, 245; kings of, *see* Carloman, Charles, Lewis, Odo, Rudolf
Frank-pledge, 229
Friesland or Frisia conquered by Godfrid of Westfold, 63; settlement of the Wikings in, 77; Ælfred's fleet manned by pirates from, 138; invaded by Gorm, 363; merchants from, 456
Frideswide or Fritheswith, St., foundation at Oxford, 438
"Frith," 22

Frith of Wedmore, 112; between Ælfred and Guthrum, 125; its true date, 151; its provisions, 151, 152
Frith-gilds, their origin, 228, 229; their constitution and objects, 230; an element of municipal life in towns, *ib.*; frith-gild of London, 229, 460; its possible connexion with the cnichten-gild and merchant-gild, 461
Frome, witenagemot at, 224, *note* 1, 252, *note* 3; Eadred dies at, 299
Fulford, battle of, priests slain at, 562, *note*
Fulham, Danes winter at, 150
"Fylki" correspond to "folks," 57
Fyrd, the, corresponds with the Karolingian "land-wehr," 133; its composition and its defects, 133-135; fines for neglect of, 134; re-organized by Ælfred, 137; by Æthelred II. and Eadric, 402

G

Gainas, [Æthelred] ealdorman of the, his daughter marries Ælfred, 101
Gainsborough, northern England submits to Swein at, 410; Swein dies at, 412; Cnut chosen king by the Danes at, 413; Æthelred marches upon, *ib.*
Galmanho, suburb of York, 560; Siward buried there, *ib.*
Gamel, son of Orm, 562, *note*
Gamel-bearn, a Northumbrian, revolts against Tostig, 562, *note*
"Garth" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Gatesgarth, 277
Geoffrey Martel, count of Anjou, his conquest of Poitou and Maine, 508; his war with King Henry, *ib.*; with William of Normandy, 509
Germany, its friendly intercourse with England, 493; kings of, *see* Arnulf, Conrad, Henry, Lewis, Otto
Ghent, its origin, 512; Dunstan takes refuge at, 309
Gild, *see* Cnichten-gild, Frith-gild, Merchant-gild
"Gill" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Gisa, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 546; a Lotharingian, 547; made bishop of Wells, *ib.*; consecrated at Rome, 580
Glastonbury, birthplace of Dunstan, 282; its school and church, 283; Æthelstan's pilgrimage to, *ib.*; tomb of St. Patrick at, *ib.*; Irish pilgrims at, *ib.*; Dunstan made abbot of, 285; its school under him, 294; memorials of his scholastic work at, 295 and *note* 1; its influence on English literature, 296, 297; wide range from which its scholars were drawn, 296, *note* 1; decline of monastic rule at, 343 and *note* 2; clerks from, accompany Æthelwold to Abingdon, 296 and *note* 1, 343, *note* 2; Eadmund, Eadred, and Eadmund Ironside buried at, 300, 418; Cnut's pilgrimage to, 433
Glamorgan, descent of the northmen on, 66, *note* 3
Gleemen, preservers of the old national poetry, 338; their popularity, *ib.*; hostility of the Church to them, 339
Glonieorn, son of Heardolf, 562, *note*
Gloucester (Glevum), its importance, 440; Ælfred's mint at, *ib.*; Guthrum winters at, 109; Æthelstan dies at, 269; Eustace of Boulogne visits, 526; monastery at, 440; Duduc abbot of, 545
Gloucestershire, part of the land of the Hwiccas, 235; detached from Mercia and joined with Hereford, &c., under Swein, 500; with Worcester under Odda, 536
Godfrey, count of Lorraine, revolts against the Emperor, 516; excommunicated by the Pope, 519; submits, *ib.*
Godfrid or Gudröd, king of Westfold and South Jutland, attack Sleswick, 63; the "Danework," *ib.*; conquers Frisia, *ib.*; slain, *ib.*; division of his kingdoms, *ib.*
Godgifu, daughter of Æthelred and

Emma, 493; marries Eustace of Boulogne, 519
Godmanchester (Durolipons), 205
Godmann, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 546
Godwine, traditions of his origin, 427; marries Gytha, *ib.*; left as ruler of England in Cnut's absence, *ib.*; made earl of Wessex, *ib.*; his importance and wealth, 427, 428; becomes "Secundarius Regis," 429; his position at Cnut's death, 478; supports the claims of Harthacnut, 479; opposed by Leofric of Mercia, 480; charged with the death of the Ætheling Ælfred, 482, 484; clears himself by oath, *ib.*; forsakes Harthacnut and joins in the election of Harald, 483, 484; his influence, 487, 493; his good government, 493; his share in Cnut's administrative system, *ib.*, *note*; his power over the Crown, 499; promotion of his house, 500; opposed by Eadward's Norman counsellors, 501; opposition of the Witan, 502; his alliance with Baldwin of Flanders, 518, 522; his attitude towards the religious revival, 514; his relations with Stigand, 578; supports the claim of Ælfric to the see of Canterbury, 524; his enmity with Robert of Jumièges, 501, 525, 526; refuses to avenge Count Eustace on the citizens of Dover, 527; gathers forces near Gloucester, *ib.*; encamps at Southwark, 528; summoned before the Witan, 529; outlawed, *ib.*; flies to Flanders, *ib.*; his alliance with the Ostmen, *ib.*; regrets at his departure, 530; equips a fleet in the Yser, 532; sympathy with, *ib.* and *note* 2; embassies from France and Flanders in his behalf, 533; failure of his first attempt at return, *ib.*; meets Harold off Wight, *ib.*; his restoration, 534, 535; change in his position, 535; his relations with Eadward after his return, 536; with the earls, 536, 537; with the Church, 537, 538; Norman feeling against him, 538; his character and work, 539-541; his death, 554; position of his house after his death, *ib.*, 567 and *note* 1
Gokstad, Wiking's ship found at, 59, *note* 1
Gorm the Old, Denmark united under, 362; at Haslo, *ib.*; conquers Jutland, 363; invades Friesland, *ib.*; defeated by Henry the Fowler, *ib.*; his death, *ib.* and *note*; extinction of his race, 477
Gorm, *see* Guthrum
Gospatric joins the revolt of Northumbria against Tostig, 562, *note*
Greatley (Greatanlea), witenagemot at, 225 and *note* 2
Grimbald of St. Omer, abbot of Winchester, 158
Grimbald of Plessis, 505
Grimsby, its commercial importance, 123 and *note* 2
"Grith," the king's, 32
Gruffydd, son of Llewelyn, growth of his power in Wales, 493; his alliance with Ælfgar, 564
Guildford, the Ætheling Ælfred seized at, 482
Gunhild, wife of Eric Bloody-Axe, 262
Gunhild, daughter of Burislaf king of the Wends, wife of Swein, 367
Gunhild, daughter of Cnut and Emma, betrothed to Henry of Germany, 468; her marriage, 493; her only child becomes a nun, 477
Gunnor, wife of Richard the Fearless, 390
Guthferth, Sihtric's son, driven out of Deira, 220, *note* 1
Guthferth, brother of Sihtric, takes refuge in Dublin, 242
Guthrum or Gorm, leader of the Danes, attacks Wessex, 98; defeated at Ashdown, 103; marches to Cambridge, 107; his second attack on Wessex, 108; makes a treaty with Ælfred at Wareham, *ib.*; winters at Gloucester, 109; joined by Hubba, *ib.*; marches to Chippenham, *ib.*; defeated at Edington,

111; treaty of Wedmore, 112; and divides East-Anglia, 123; becomes master of London, 124; character and extent of his realm, 124, 125; baptized at Alre, 125; his chrismloosing, *ib.* and *note* 1; called Æthelstan in baptism, 126; story of his relations with Harald Fairhair, 126-128; his defeat at Saucourt, 148; his submission to Ælfred, 149; his [second] peace with Ælfred, 125, 151 and *note;* his friendship with Hrolf, 243; his death, 168
Guy of Burgundy, grandson of Richard the Good, 505; his possessions in Normandy, 506; revolts against William, *ib.*
Guy, count of Ponthieu, captured by the Normans at Mortemer, 553
Gwent, the, the earliest Wessex, 231; its military advantages, 45, 46; Danes in, 105, 109
Gyrth, son of Godwine, flies with him to Flanders, 529; made earl of East-Anglia, 565; accompanies Tostig to Rome, 580; slain by William at Senlac, 571
Gyrwas, country of, included in the East-Anglian ealdormanry, 261; joined with Nottingham and Leicester under Beorn, 500
Gyrwas, North, their land represented by Huntingdonshire, 236
Gyrwas, South, their land represented by Cambridgeshire, 236
Gytha, sister of Ulf, marries Godwine, 427
Gytha of Hordaland, 169

H

Hafursfiord, battle of, 169 and *note* 2; its date, 170, *note* 3
Hakon, son of Harald Fairhair, drives Eric Bloody-Axe from Norway, 263
Hakon, Jarl, ruler of Norway under Harald Blaatand, 365; Norway revolts against him, 380; defeats the Jomsborgers, 407
Hakon, nephew of Cnut, sent to rule in Norway, 424; driven out, 466; restored by Cnut, 468
Halfdene ravages Bernicia, 93, *note* 1, 106; expels Bishop Eardulf from Lindisfarne, 106; burns Coldingham, *ib.*; destroys Carlisle, 107; ravages Cumbria and Strath-Clyde, *ib.* and *note* 1, 116; divides Deira, 116
Halfdene, king of Northumbria, his defeat and death, 196
Halgoland, 179; called a "scyr" by Ælfred, 234, *note* 2
Hallamshire, survival of the ancient divisions of Deira, 231
"Ham" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Hamon of Thorigny, 505
Hamtonshire; victories of its fyrd over the Wikings, 75, 86; Wiking raids upon, 171; origin and meaning of its name, 231, 232; date of its formation, *ib.*; its relation to Wiltshire, *ib.*; ealdormen of, 233, *note* 2; *see* Wessex (Central), Wulfheard
Hamton, *see* Southampton
Hampshire, *see* Hamtonshire
"Hand" or "mund," its meaning, 22 and *note*
Hanse Towns, their trade with England, 447
Harald, son of Cnut, 421; claims the crown of England, 477; called Harefoot, 480; his claims supported by Leofric and the lithsmen of London, *ib.*; becomes king of all England save Wessex, *ib.*; seizes Sandwich, 446 and *note* 3; robs Emma of Cnut's treasure, 481; causes the Ætheling Ælfred to be blinded, 482; chosen king in Wessex, 484; his death and burial, *ib.*; his body outraged by Harthacnut, *ib.*
Harald Blaatand, king of Denmark, date of his birth, 363, *note;* his policy in Normandy, 280; his designs upon Britain, 289, 290; his son Eric in Northumbria, 290 and *note;* his war with Otto the Great, 323; his son king of Semland, 290, 363; his overlordship over Norway, 363; his alliance

with Norman dukes, *ib.*; invades the Saxon Duchy, *ib.*; defeated by Otto, 365; again attacks Germany on Otto's death, *ib.*; becomes a Christian, *ib.*; transfers his royal seat to Roeskilde, *ib.*; goes to dwell in Jutland, *ib.*; opposed by his son Swein, 366; drives Swein from Denmark, *ib.*; his defeat and death, *ib.*; story of his burial-feast, 367, 368

Harald, son of Swein, becomes king of Denmark, 413; probable date of his death, 425, *note*

Harald Fairhair (Harfager), king of Westfold, 169; becomes king of Norway, *ib.*; drives out the Wikings from the Orkneys and founds an earldom there, 170 and *note* 3; his relations with Æthelstan [Guthrum], 126-128; his death, 262

Harald Hardrada becomes king of Norway, 502; invades England, 569; his overthrow at Stamford Bridge, *ib.*

Harald, jarl, joins Guthrum's attack on Wessex, 98; slain at Ashdown, *ib.*, *note* 1

Harald, *see* Strut-Harald

Harold, son of Godwine, 479; earl of East-Anglia, 500; opposes Swein's restoration, 523; flies to Bristol, 529; takes refuge in Ireland, *ib.*; gathers ships at Dublin, 532; descent on Porlock, 533; joins his father, *ib.*; his earldom restored, 537; succeeds Godwine as earl of Wessex, 554; his relations with Eadward, *ib.*; with England, 555, 582; his character, *ib.*, 583, 585; his plans for the succession to the Crown, 556; his policy in the distribution of the earldoms, 557, 584; and towards Ælfgar, 564; takes possession of the earldom of Hereford, 565; his power and his aim, 566; failure of his foreign policy, 567; his oath to William, *ib.*; obscurity of his administration, 583; his change of policy, 584; his possible share in the rising of Northumbria, 584-585; present at Eadward's death, 581; succeeds him as king, 568; crowned by Ealdred, 581; defeats the Norwegians at Stamford Bridge, 569; marches back to London, *ib.*; encamps on Senlac, 570; his death, 572; his huscarls, 493, *note*

Harold or Heriold, claims the throne of Jutland, 64; his conversion and expulsion, *ib.*

Harthacnut, son of Cnut, ruler in Denmark under the guardianship of Ulf, 467; appointed by Cnut to succeed him in England, 477, 478; his treaty with Magnus, 477; his claim supported by Godwine and Emma, 479; chosen king of Wessex, 480; forsaken by Wessex, 483, 484; plans invasion of England, 484; chosen king, *ib.*; character of his reign, 485; sends for Eadward, *ib.*; his death, 487; redistribution of earldoms in his time, 498

Harthacnut or Hardegon, a Norwegian conqueror, supposed ancestor of Gorm the Old, 361, *note* 1

Haslo, battle of, 148

Hasting, leader of the Wikings, 112; his defeat at Haslo, 148; his struggle with King Odo, 170; invades Kent, 170, 171; held at bay by Ælfred, 171; encamps on the Colne, *ib.*; the Danelaw rises in his aid, *ib.*; attacked by Eadward and Æthelred, 172; his attack on the Severn valley, *ib.*; defeated, 173; occupies Chester, *ib.*; besieged and driven out by Æthelred, *ib.*; withdraws to a camp on the Lea, *ib.*; rejoined by the fleet from Exeter, *ib.*; returns to Frankland, 174

Hastings, mint at, 228; its sailors pursue Swein, 523; support Godwine, 532, *note* 2; battle of, 570-572

"Haugh" in place-names, 276, *note* 2

"Heathendom," decrees against, under Æthelred II., 402 and *note*

2; under Cnut, 10, 11; strife of Christianity with, 9-11; survival of its customs, 11, 12
Hebrides, the, Wiking settlements in, 66, 215; conquered by the Orkney jarls, 558
Heca, bishop of Selsey, 546
Hecanas, their land becomes Herefordshire, 235
Helinandus, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 548
Heming, king of South Jutland, 63; peace with the Franks, 63, 64
Hengestdun, battle of, 67
Henry the Fowler defeats Gorm the Old, 363
Henry III., Emperor, betrothed to Cnut's daughter, 468; his marriage, 493; his character and policy, 514; his ecclesiastical reforms, 515, 519; revolt against, 516; the rebels excommunicated by Leo IX., 519; calls on England for help, 521; the rebels submit, 521, 522
Henry, king of France, restored by Robert the Devil, 474; fights at Val-ès-Dunes, 506; his war with Geoffrey of Anjou, 508; joined by William, 508, 509; favours Godwine, 533; his policy, 552; his invasion of Normandy, *ib.*; its failure, 553
Heorstan, father of St. Dunstan, 282
Herebriht, ealdorman, slain by the Wikings, 78
Hereford, the North-Welsh chiefs submit to Æthelstan at, 220; bishops of, *see* Walter; earls of, *see* Harold, Ralf, Swein
Herefordshire, the land of the Hecanas, 235; and of the Magesætas, 418, 498; severed from the Mercian earldom, 498; fighting between Normans and English in, 527; raid of Ælfgar and Gruffydd upon, 564
Heretha-land, 50, *note*
Hereward heads a revolt in the fens, 577
Herfast, brother of Gunnor, 390
Herlouin, founder of Bec, his reception of Lanfranc, 504
Herlwin, count of Ponthieu, attacked by Flanders, 267
Hermann, bishop of the Wilsætas (Ramsbury), 545, 546
Hertford founded by Eadward the Elder, 197
Hertfordshire, its origin, 237; forms part of the East-Anglian ealdormanry, 261, *note* 1; joined with Essex, &c., under Leofwine, 565; William marches into, 572
Hexham, see of, its extinction, 93
Hildebrand, counsellor of Pope Leo IX., 515; of Nicholas II. and Alexander II., 579
High-reeve or High-thegn, office created by Æthelred, 394, 429, 543; becomes permanent under Cnut, *ib.*; developes into the "Secundarius Regis" and the justiciar, *ib.*; *see* Æfic, Eadric, Wulfgeat
"Higra," 118
Hlothere and Eadric, laws of, 21, *notes* 1 and 3, 337, *note* 1
Hoard, the, Dunstan in charge of, 294, 299; accompanies the king in Dunstan's day, 403, *note* 2; settled at Winchester in Eadward's day, *ib.*; its contents, 403, 543; their sources, 403, 404; its importance under Eadward, 493, *note*
Holland, the count of, revolts against the Emperor Henry III., 516
Holy Island, *see* Lindisfarne
Hordere, the, his various titles, 542; his functions, 543; growth of his importance as treasurer, *ib.*; earliest holders of the office, *ib.*
Horseflesh, use of, 10
Horse-thegn or constable, his office, 542
Howel, king of the North-Welsh, becomes subject to Eadward the Elder, 208, *note* 2; submits to Æthelstan, 220; present in his witenagemots, 224 and *note* 1
Hrægel-thegn, 542
Hrolf, friend of Guthrum of East-Anglia, 243; his forays along the Seine, *ib.*; their results, *ib.*; his

attacks upon Rouen, 244; his settlement in Frankland, *ib.*; probably of Norse blood, 245, *note*; supports Charles the Simple against the dukes of Paris, 246; receives grant of the Bessin, *ib.*
Hubba, brother of Ivar, 91, *note* 1, 96; conquers East-Anglia, *ib.*; commands a Wiking fleet in the Bristol Channel, 98; joins Guthrum in the Severn, 109; defeated by the fyrd of Devon, 111
Hubert, St., his hermitage, 276
Hugh the Great, son of Odo of Paris, 246; marries Æthelstan's sister Eadhild, 250; attacks Normandy, *ib.*; brings back "Lewis From-beyond-sea," 265; leagues with William Longsword and Arnulf of Flanders against Lewis, 268; makes peace with Lewis, 272; joins Harald Blaatand and the Normans against him, 280; receives him as a captive, *ib.*; his defiance to Eadmund, *ib.*
Hugh, Norman reeve of Exeter, 396; surrenders it to Swein, *ib.*
Hundred, division of the shire, possibly instituted by Ælfred, 141, *note* 6; first appears by name under Eadgar, 349, *note* 3; names of hundreds in Dorset, 5 and *note*
Huntingdon occupied and fortified by Eadward the Elder, 205; Danes of, attack Bedford, *ib.*; encamp at Tempsford, *ib.*; swear allegiance to Eadward, 211
Huntingdonshire represents North-Gyrwa-land, 236; forms part of the East-Anglian ealdormanry, 261, *note* 1; joined to Northumbria under Siward, 537
Hungary, Eadmund Ironside's children take refuge in, 420, 472; conquered by the Emperor Henry III., 514
Hurstbourn, its labour-roll, 331
Huscarls instituted by Cnut, 425, 432; remain with Emma at Winchester, 480, 481; their developement under Harold, 493, *note*
Huscarl-tax, its probable origin, 404, *note* 2
Husting, the Danish, 465
Hwiccas, land of the, one of the five regions of the Mercian kingdom, 235; divided into the shires of Gloucester and Worcester, *ib.*; their clearings in the south of Arden become Warwickshire, 235, 236; earldom of, severed from Mercia by Cnut, 498; given to Odda, 536, 557; ealdormen of, *see* Leofric, Leofwine; earls of, *see* Odda

I

Iceland, emigration from the Danelaw to, 131 and *note* 1; colonized by the northmen, 169
Icknield Way, 201
India, Ælfred sends alms to, 105
Ine, king of Wessex, his pilgrimage to Rome and death, 17; his laws, 21 and *notes* 1 and 4; their provisions concerning the Welsh, 22; concerning slaves, 334; concerning chapmen and trade, 337, *note* 1; extent of the shire-organization in his time, 233
Ingelram, count of Ponthieu, marries the sister of William the Conqueror, 519; excommunicated by the Council of Rheims, 520
Inguar, *see* Ivar
Ireland, advance of the Wikings upon, 62, 65, 66; their settlements in, 74; its earliest towns founded by them, *ib.*; first appearance of the Danes in, 76, *note* 2, 90; *see* Dublin, Ostmen
Iron supplied by Scandinavia to Britain, 447
Ipswich plundered by Norwegian Wikings, 370; its importance, 449
Islandshire, survival of the ancient divisions of Deira, 231
"Itene Wood," 174
Ittingford, the frith of Wedmore renewed at, 191
Ivar or Inguar the Boneless, leader

of the Wikings, attacks Munster, 90, 91; brother of Hubba, 91, *note* 1, 96; attacks East-Anglia, 91; conquers it, *ib.*, *note* 1, 96; returns to Deira, 98; his race become kings of Northumbria, 122

J

Jarrow burnt by the Wikings, 51
"Jarl" corresponds to the English "Ætheling," 57
Jedburgh, Wulfstan prisoner at, 292
Jelling, burial-mounds of Gorm and Thyra at, 363
Jeothwel, king of the North-Welsh, becomes subject to Eadward the Elder, 208, *note* 2
John XII., Pope, gives the pallium to Dunstan, 317
John the Old-Saxon made abbot of Athelney, 158, 178 and *note* 1
Jomsborg, Harald Blaatand's stronghold on the Baltic, 366; Harald dies there, *ib.*; its independence under Palnatoki, 367; Swein's dealings with, 367, 368; its jarls defeated by Jarl Hakon, 407; *see* Palnatoki, Sigwald
Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, her marriage with Æthelwulf and coronation, 82 and *note*, 83; her marriage with Baldwin Iron-arm, 183
Judith, sister or daughter of Baldwin of Lille, marries Tostig, son of Godwine, 522
Judwal, king of North-Wales, story of his tribute to Eadgar, 324, *note* 1; present in Æthelstan's witenagenots, 224 and *note* 1
Jurisprudence, early English, 22
Justice, public, its original groundwork, 22; earliest conception of, 23; re-organized by Ælfred, 139, 140; difficulty of enforcing, 29, 140, 141; its regulation under Æthelstan, 225, 226; folk's justice, 28; king's justice, 29, 30
Justiciar, his office, 101, 429, 493, *note* 546
Jutland, settlement of the Danes in, 88; conquered by Gorm, 363
Jutland, South, the original Engleland, 62; its kings dependent on the kingdom of Westfold, 62-64; kings of, *see* Godfrid, Harold, Heming

K

Kenneth MacAlpin, king of the Scots of Dalriada, succeeds to the Pictish throne, 185; Edinburgh ceded to him, 324; and perhaps Lothian, 470; his "raids upon Saxony," *ib.*
Kent, lingering heathenism in, 9; its Witan petition Æthelstan to enforce justice, 30; revolts against Offa and Cenwulf, 45; its relation to Wessex under Ecgberht, 69; its wealth and importance, 77, 78; its fyrd defeated by the Wikings in Thanet, 79; its eastern shores ravaged by pirates from Gaul, 86; united to Wessex at the accession of Æthelred, *ib.*, *note* 2; invaded by Hasting, 170, 171; early use of coin in, 227, 228; kingdom of, its shires perhaps represented by the lathes, 231; becomes a shire of the West-Saxon realm, 234; called "Kent-shire," *ib.*, *note* 1; iron-mines in, 336; salt-works in, *ib.* and *note* 1; harried by pirates from Ireland, 382; by Thurkill, 407; supports Godwine, 532, *note* 2; joined with Essex, &c., under Leofwine, 565; revolts against Odo of Bayeux, 574; kings of, *see* Æthelbald, Æthelberht, Æthelstan, Æthelwulf, Eadric, Hlothere
Kesteven, 261 and *note* 1
Kettleside, 277
King, the, his judicial powers, 30: appeals to, *ib.*; his justice supersedes the folk's justice, *ib.*; his court, 31; his "grith," 32; his progresses and their results, 32, 33; growth of his dignity, 33, 34, 303; his consecration, 34, 307, 308; organization of his house-

hold, 34, 180; change in the conception of his position, 139; becomes the source of justice, *ib.*; his supreme jurisdiction, 140 and *note* 1; principle of personal allegiance, 208, 209; his territorial character, 210; importance of his presence and personal action, 258, 303; weakness of his position, 301, 302; his share in the appointment of bishops, 347, 524; growth of the royal administration, 542; his writ, 544
"King's Court," 544
Kingdoms, the Three, 1, 2, 39; their influence on the kingship, 33, 34; on social classes, 34, 45; on folk-moot and witenagemot, 36-38; weakness of Northumbria and Mercia, 38-45; their break-up, 45-49
Kings, tribal, their relation to the Æthelings, 34; number of, in the earlier states, 39; their extinction, *ib.* and *note* 1
Kingston, crowning of Æthelstan at, 217, *note* 3; of Eadred, 287 and *note* 2; of Æthelred II., 356, *note* 1
Kirbyshire, survival of the ancient divisions of Deira, 231
Kirkshire or parish, 13, 231
Kirtlington, witenagemot at, 353
Kyle in Ayrshire, 275
Kynesige, bishop of Lichfield, kinsman of Dunstan, 282, *note* 1; sent with Dunstan to bring Eadwig back to the coronation-feast, 308

L

Labour-rents at Hurstbourn, 331; at Dyddenham, *ib.*, 332
Lake district, Norwegian settlements in, 276 and *note* 2, 277
Lambay Island, 66, *note* 3
Lambeth, Harthacnut dies at, 487
Lancashire, its origin, 237, *note* 2; Norwegian settlers in, 276, 277
Lancaster, 276
Land, its possession the test of freedom, 209
Landnama-bok, 131
Land's End, Æthelstan at, 220
Land-tax, its beginning, 405 and *note*; its assessment, 405, 406; the basis of English finance, 431; its effects, *ib.*; its amount, 465; *see* Danegeld
Land-wehr, the, 133
Lanfranc, a citizen of Pavia, at Avranches, 504; his school at Bec, 505, 506; opposes William's marriage, 551; reconciled with him, *ib.*; negotiates at Rome, 552
Laon, city of the West-Franks, 266
Lastingham destroyed by Danes, 93
Lathes of Kent, 231
Law, early conception of, 19, 20; written law, its limited sphere, 20; criminal law, Eadmund's reform of, 27, 278, 279
Lawmen at Cambridge, 461, *note* 2; Chester, 442; Lincoln, 122, 450, 461, *note* 2; Stamford, 122, 461, *note* 2
Laws of Ælfred, 145, 146 and *note* 1; Æthelberht, 20, 21 and *notes* 1 and 2; Æthelstan, 225 and *note* 4, 234 and *note* 2; Cnut, 444; Eadgar, 425, 426; Hlothere and Eadric, 21, *notes* 1 and 3; Wihtræd, *ib.*; Ine, 21 and *notes* 1 and 4
Legates sent by Alexander II., 580; their share in Wulfstan's elevation, *ib.*
Leicester, 235; one of the Five Boroughs, 122; taken by Æthelflæd, 207; date of its submission, 191 *note* 4; stormed by the Ostmen, 273; recovered by Eadmund, *ib.*
Leicestershire, 235; Danish settlements in, 123; severed from Mercia and joined with Nottingham, &c., under Beorn, 498, 500
Leo IX. becomes Pope, 515; his reforms, 519; excommunicates the rebel princes, *ib.*; quashes Spearhafoc's appointment to London, 526; taken prisoner by the Normans, 551; lays Normandy under interdict, *ib.*
Leofa, slayer of Eadmund I., 280

Leofric, son of Leofwine, ealdorman of the Hwiccas, 427; earl of Mercia, 480; opposes Godwine's policy, *ib.*; supports the claims of Harald, *ib.*; demands a division of the realm, *ib.*; his royal descent, 497; his influence, *ib.*, 498; opposes Godwine, 502; his share in the religious revival, 514; joins the king at Gloucester, 527; his death, 564
Leofric, chancellor to the Confessor, 545; bishop of Crediton, *ib.*, 546
Leofsige, ealdorman of Essex, 373 and *notes* 4 and 5; his jurisdiction over the reeves of Oxford and Buckingham, 261, *note* 1; sent to buy a truce with the pirates, 394; his "pride and daring," *ib.* and *note* 3; slays Æfic, 395 and *note* 1; banished, *ib.*, *note* 2
Leofwine, bishop of Lichfield, 579
Leofwine, ealdorman of the Hwiccas, 372, *note* 1, 373; of Mercia, 420, 426
Leofwine, son of Godwine, flies to Dublin, 529; his earldom, 565
Leominster, the abbess of, 501
Leonaford, 159
Lethra, 362 and *note*
Lewes, mint at, 228; tolls of, 333
Lewis the Gentle, Emperor, supports Harold in Jutland, 64
Lewis the German, his struggle with pirates, 147, 148; his death, 148
Lewis III., king of the West-Franks, defeats Guthrum at Saucourt, 148; his death, *ib.*
Lewis "From-over-sea," son of Charles the Simple and Eadgifu, at the court of Æthelstan, 265; recalled by the West-Franks, *ib.*; breaks with Hugh of Paris and the Normans, 266; recalls his mother, *ib.*; his alliance with Æthelstan and Arnulf of Flanders, 267; break-up of their league, 267, 268; his war with Otto, *ib*; league of Hugh, William, and Arnulf against, 268; driven from Lorraine, 272; reconciled with William, Otto, and Hugh, *ib.*; master of Normandy, 273; taken prisoner by Harald Blaatand and the Normans, 280; his liberation demanded by Eadmund, *ib.*
Lewton, witenagemot at, 221, *note* 2, 224, *notes*
Lichfield, bishops of, *see* Kynesige, Leofwine
Liège, a priest of, his Life of St. Dunstan, 281, *note*
Limerick founded by Wikings, 74
Limoges pillaged by Wikings, 77
Lindisfarne plundered, 51, 93; Bishop Eardulf expelled from, 106
Lincoln, one of the Five Boroughs, 122; its law-men, *ib.*, 450, 461, *note* 2; submits to Eadward the Elder, 208; its growth, 449; connexion of its merchants with the North, *ib.*; its merchant-gild, 450
Lincolnshire, 235, 236; trithings and wapentakes in, 122; Danish settlements in, *ib.*; attached to the Mercian earldom, 557; joined with Leicester and Nottingham under Beorn, 498, 500
Lindiswaras, land of, becomes Lincolnshire, 235, 236
Lindsey, kings of, 39, *note* 1; descents of the Wikings on, 77; its bishop expelled by the Danes, 93; submits to Swein, 410; negotiates with Cnut, 413
Literature under Ælfred, 154-158; English prose, its birth, 160; its character, 161 and *notes*; Ælfred's translations, 162-164, 168; the Chronicle, 165-167, and *notes*; literature under Ælfred's successors, 296 and *note* 2; influence of the Glastonbury school on, 297, 298; difference between the first and second schools of, *ib.*; its revival under Dunstan and Eadgar, 339, 342
Lithsmen of London, 462; support Harald Harefoot's claims, 480
Lochlann, White, 65, *note* 3
London, the mother-city of Essex, 149; under Mercian rule, 455-

457 ; conquered by Ecgberht, 150; sacked by the Wikings, 79, 150 ; Danes winter at, 105, *note* 2 ; doubtful story of Ælfred's besieging them there, *ib.* ; becomes subject to Guthrum, 124, 150 ; passes into Ælfred's hands, 150 ; repeopled by him, *ib.* and *note* 2 ; its walls restored, 197, 459 ; intrusted to Æthelred of Mercia, 151, 171 ; its severance from Essex and formation of its dependent shire, 151, 152 and *note*, 237 ; its situation, 152, *note ;* its men attack the Danes in Essex, 172, 173 ; taken from Mercia and annexed to Wessex by Eadward the Elder, 197 ; mint at, 228 ; possibly included in the East-Saxon ealdormanry, 261 ; Æthelred II. gathers a fleet at, 377 ; repulses Swein and Olaf, 380 and *note* 1 ; successfully resists Swein, 411 ; sends hostages to him, *ib.* ; Æthelred returns to, 413 ; Æthelred dies at, 415, 416 ; besieged by Cnut and Eadric, *ib.* ; Eadmund chosen king in, 416 ; its defence against Cnut, *ib.* ; ceded to Cnut, 418, *note ;* Cnut crowned at, 425 ; obscurity of its early history, 452 ; disappearance of Roman life from, 452, 453, 458, *note* 1 ; its heathenism, *ib.* ; its growth, 453 ; church and monastery of St. Paul at, *ib.* ; its trade, 456, 459, 463, 464 ; sokes in, 454 ; churches in, *ib.*, 456 ; its growth under Bishop Erkenwald, *ib.* ; its oldest part, 456 ; site of its port, *ib.* ; its wic-reeve or port-reeve, *ib.*, 461 ; Offa's vill in, 457 and *note ;* East-cheap, 458 ; its bridge, 459, *note* 1 ; its geographical position, 459 ; its importance under Æthelstan, 460 ; its frithgild, *ib.* ; its eight moneyers, *ib.*, 228 ; cnichten-gild, 461 ; merchant-gild, *ib.*, 480 ; connexion of its municipal with its ecclesiastical life, 459, *note* 3, 461 ; its portmannimot, 461 ; its growth under Æthelstan's successors, 462, 463 ; under Eadgar and Æthelred, 463-465 ; Danes settled in, 465 ; its taxation in Cnut's first year, *ib.* ; becomes the centre of the kingdom under Cnut, 465, 466 ; its lithsmen, 462, 480 ; Flemish merchants in, 517 ; declares for Godwine, 534 ; Eadward the Ætheling dies at, 565 ; surrenders to William, 573 ; his charter to, *ib.* ; witenagemots at, 425, 528, 534 ; bishops of, *see* Dunstan, Erkenwald, Mellitus, Spearhafoc, Theodred, William, Wini

Lorraine harried by the Wikings, 148 ; its loyalty to the Karolingian house, 267 ; becomes subject to Lewis From-beyond-sea, *ib.* ; Lewis driven out of, 272

Lorraine, Lower, *see* Godfrey

Lotharingians in royal chapel, 544-545

Lothian, 470 ; possibly granted by Eadgar to Kenneth, *ib.* ; granted by Cnut to Malcolm II., 471 ; results of the cession, 471, 472

"Lunden-wara," the, 459, *note* 3

Lyderic, count of Flanders, 511

Lymne, Wikings land at, 170

M

Macbeth, Mormær of Moray, murders Duncan, 493 ; succeeds him as king of Scots, *ib.*, 558 ; defeated by Siward, 559 ; his death, *ib.*

Mærleswegen, shire-reeve of Deira, joins revolt against Tostig, 562, *note*

Magesætas, 417 ; join Edmund Ironside, *ib.* ; *see* Herefordshire

Magnus, son of St. Olaf, king of Norway, 477 ; treaty with Harthacnut, *ib.* ; claims throne of Denmark, 493 ; drives Swein Estrithson out, 502 ; threatens to invade England, *ib.*

Maine conquered by Geoffrey Martel, 508 ; by William, 554

Malcolm I., king of Scots, son of Constantine, 274 ; Cumbria granted to, 278

Malcolm II. defeated at Durham, 399; again invades Northumbria, 470; submits to Cnut, 471; receives a grant of Lothian, *ib.*
Malcolm III., son of Duncan, becomes king of Scotland, 559; sworn brother of Tostig, 563; marries Margaret, 576; swears fealty to William, 577
Maldon fortified by Eadward the Elder, 204; Danes defeated at, 205; victory of Norwegians at, 370
Malger, archbishop of Rouen, 551
Man, Isle of, colonized by the Norwegians, 276; Æthelred II. makes a descent upon, 383
Manchester (Mancunium) fortified by Eadward the Elder, 214
Manors, labour-rolls of, 331-333
Margaret, daughter of the Ætheling Eadward, 556; her marriage, 576
Matilda, daughter of Baldwin V., sought in marriage by William of Normandy, 516; marriage forbidden, 521; it takes place, 551
Mellitus, bishop of London, his mission-work, 452, 453; founds St. Paul's, 453
Melrose destroyed by the Danes, 93
Merchant-gild of Lincoln, 450; London, 461, 480; Nottingham, 439
Mercia, lingering heathenism in, 9, 10; earliest written law in, 20; its condition at the close of the eighth century, 44, 45; its five great ealdormen, *ib.*, 121, *note* 3; its five regions, 235; its dependent relation to Wessex, 95, 143, 192; threatened by the Danes, 94; makes peace with them, 95; pays tribute to them, 96; conquered by them, 106; its division into Danish and English, *ib.*, *note* 2, 121; Eastern or Danish Mercia, the district of the Five Boroughs, 121, 122; Western or English Mercia, its extent, 121, 142; its importance, 142; its union with Wessex under Ælfred, 143, 144; the intellectual revival under him, 155-157; raid of the Wikings upon, 195; ravaged by Danes, 196; part of it annexed to Wessex, 196, 197; wholly annexed, 208; traces of its separate existence in the election of Æthelstan, 217, *note* 3; traces of its original divisions, 235, 236; its shire-organization, 235; derivation of its shire-names, 236; Eadgar chosen king of, 312; reunited to Wessex, 315; disappearance of monasticism in, 343; ravaged by Cnut, 415, 416; kings of, called "Kings of the English" by the Franks, 44; their policy towards the Church, 72; their burial-place at Repton, 106; *see* Æthelstan, Beorhtwulf, Burhred, Ceolwulf, Eadgar, Offa, Wiglaf, Wulfhere; ealdormanry of, 144; created by Ælfred, 258; suppressed by Eadward, *ib.*; revived by Eadwig, 309; significance of its revival, 309, 310; its extent under Eadwig, 310 and *note* 2; suppressed, 357; revived in favour of Eadric, 401; called "Myrcenarice" 408; ealdormen of, *see* Ælfhere, Ælfric, Æthelred, Eadric; earldom of, its extent under Leofric, 498; further reduced, 500; again extended, 536, 557; earls of, *see* Ælfgar, Eadwine, Leofric, Leofwine
Meredydd, son of Owen, 375
Mersc-wara, 78
Merton, victory of the Danes at, 104
Middlesborough, 117
Middlesex, its origin, 152 and *note*, 237; part of East-Saxon ealdormanry, 261; joined with Essex, &c., under Leofwine, 565
Middleton, witenagemot at, 221 *note* 2, 224 *note* 2
Mieczyslav, duke of the Poles, 369
Mildred, St., 438, *note* 2; church dedicated to her in Bristol, 444; Oxford, 438 and *note* 2: London, 457
Mills in Dorset, 7 and *note*
Milton, Hasting winters at, 171
Mines, salt, in Cheshire, 7, *note*;

iron, in Kent, 336; lead, in the Severn Valley, *ib.*
Mints, 228; at Bristol, 444; Gloucester, 440; Oxford, 144, 438
Monarchy, its character and growth, 302, 303; causes of its weakness, 257, 258, 303; its struggle with feudalism, 301, 302, 304, 305; *see* Ealdormanries, Ealdormen; its alliance with the Church, 70-72, 317, 318; *see* Crown, King
Monasticism, its decay, 13, 177, and *note*, 342, 343; revival of, 344; attitude of Dunstan towards it, 345 and *note;* of Eadgar, 344, 345; its local character, 345; causes of its failure, 346; its part in political contest, 352, 353, *note* 4; attitude of Godwine and Leofric towards, 514
Montacute, 575
Montreuil taken by Arnulf, 267; retaken by William Longsword, *ib.*
Moot, folk-, its decline, 36; answers to "Thing," 57
Moray, Mormær of, *see* Macbeth
Morcant, under-king of the North-Welsh, present in Æthelstan's witenagemots, 224 and *note* 1; in Eadred's, 298
Morkere, son of Ælfgar, succeeds Tostig as earl of Northumbria, 567; submits to William, 573, 574; revolts against him, 576; joins Hereward, *ib.*, 577
Mortain, counts of, 390
Mortemer, battle of, 553
"Mund," 22, *note*, 23, 24
"Mund-bryce," 22, *note*
Munster, Ivar the Boneless in, 91, 92
"Myrcenarice," for Mercia, 408

N

Nantes sacked by the Wikings, 76
Neal of St. Sauveur, 505
Nicæa, Robert the Devil dies at, 476
Nicolas II., Pope, 579; consecrates Walter and Gisa, 580; Tostig's visit to, *ib.*, 567, *note* 1
"Nithing," 523
Norfolk, 237, *note* 2
Norhamshire, 231
Normandy, its connexion with English history, 244, 245; with the English Danelaw, 245, 246; its influence on French and English politics, 247, 249; claims to supremacy over the Bretons, 250; attacked by Hugh the Great and the Bretons, *ib.;* its greatness under William Longsword, 272, 273; revolts against him, 388; its anarchy after his death, 273; mastered by Lewis, *ib.*; stirred up against him by Harald Blaatand, 280; its first treaty with England, 376 and *note;* its friendly relation to the northmen, 383, 386, *note;* its growth under Richard the Fearless, 323, 387, 389, 390; under Richard the Good, 391; beginnings of its connexion with England, 391-393; Emma and her sons take refuge in, 411; and Æthelred, 412; the English Æthelings in, 413, 473; its anarchy in William's early years, 476; the Truce of God, 490; Eadward's relations to, 491; revolts against William, 505, 506; its relations with Flanders, 516, 518; hatred of Godwine, 538; laid under interdict, 551; dukes of, *see* Hrolf, Richard, Robert, William
Normans called "pirates" by the Franks, 247; their temper, 421, 473, 476; Norman chaplains, 545, 546; companions of the Ætheling Ælfred, their fate, 482; followers of Eadward, 492; their aims, 509, 510; outlawed, 535; take refuge in Scotland, 559
Northampton submits to Eadward, 204; burnt by Thurkill, 408
Northamptonshire, 236; part of East-Anglian ealdormanry, 261 and *note* 1; joined with Northumbria under Siward, 537; under Tostig, 565; feorm of, 404, *note* 2
Northmen, use and meaning of the name, 50, *note*, 65, *note*, 3, 68, *note*; *see* Danes, Norwegians, Wikings
Northumberland, 237, *note* 2
Northumbria, lingering heathenism

in, 9, 10; absence of written law in, 20; fall of its royal house, 40; civil wars in, 40, 41, 91; the Church in, during the anarchy, 41; its schools, 41, 42; submits to Ecgberht, 96 and *note* 2; first appearance of the Wikings in, 51; conquered by the Danes, 91, 92; ruin of its learning and civilization, 93, 94; divided by Halfdene, 115; its organization under the Danes, 120, 122; joins a league against Eadward, 216; submission to him, 217 and *note* 1; Æthelstan becomes king of, 221; rises against Æthelstan, 242, 253; descent of the Ostmen upon, 252; severed from Wessex, 257; its inhabitants in Æthelstan's day, 263 and *note* 2, 264; rises against Eadmund, 270; Olaf Sihtric's son king of, 289; its Witan swear allegiance to Eadred, *ib.*; receive Eric Hiring as king, 290, 291; Eric driven from, 290 and *note*, 291; ravaged by Eadred, 291; again submits to him, *ib.*; Olaf returns to, *ib.*; its second revolt under Eric, 292; its final submission, 293; Eadred becomes king of, *ib.*; reduced to an earldom, *ib.*; joins the revolt against Eadwig, 313 and *note*; absence of religious houses in, 345; submits to Cnut, 415; invaded by the Scots, 399, 435, 470; its northern part joined to Scotland, 471; earldom of, divided, 373; re-united, 399; struggle of the rival earls in, *ib.*, *note*; again divided, 495; re-united under Siward, *ib.*; its independence under him, 492; its wild condition, 495, *note* 1, 496, 497 and *note*, 562, *note*; Nottingham, &c. joined with it, 537; brought fully under the royal power, 561 and *note*; ravaged by William, 575; kings of, *see* Æthelred, Æthelstan, Æthelwold, Alchred, Alfwold, Bagsecg, Eadberht, Eadred, Eardwulf, Ecgberht, Ecwils, Eric, Guthferth, Halfdene, Olaf, Osred, Oswulf, Ragnald, Ricsig, Sihtric; earls of, *see* Ælfhelm, Copsige, Eadwulf, Ealdred, Eric, Morkere, Oslac, Oswulf, Siward, Tostig, Uhtred, Waltheof; *see also* Bernicia and Deira

Northweorthig, *see* Derby

Norway, its beginnings, 62; its physical character, 56; starting-point of the northmen's first attack, 65 and *note* 3; united under Harald Fair-hair, 169; Harald Blaatand overlord of, 364; ruled by Jarl Hakon, 369; attacked by Swein, *ib.*; claimed by Olaf Tryggvason, 378; revolts against Hakon, 380; under-kingdom of England, 424; ruled by Cnut's nephew Hakon, *ib.*; revolts against Cnut, 466, 468; Swein, son of Cnut, driven out of, 477; Tostig takes refuge in, 569; kings of, *see* Cnut, Eric, Harald, Magnus, Olaf, Swein

Norwegians, character of their country, 53, 56, 178, 179; their temper, 54; their love of fighting, *ib.*, 55; of home, 55 and *note* 1; of the sea, 56, 57; their usages, 57; their religion, 57, 58; their warfare, 58; their ships, 59 and *notes*, 88, *note* 2; causes of their movement to the south, 60 and *note* 3, 61, 62; their first coming to England, 50, 51; civil wars among, 63; alliance with the Welsh, 67, 75; their settlement in Shetland, 66; in the Hebrides, Orkneys, Caithness, Sutherland, and Ross, *ib.*, 107, 170, 215; in Ireland, 65-67, 74, 76, *note* 2, 90; in Yorkshire, 117; in Westmoringa-land, 274-275; in Man, 276; in Lancashire and the Lake district, *ib.* and *note* 2, 277; in Iceland, 131, 169; their settlements marked by the terminations "by," "thwaite," and "dale," 116; movement towards unity among, 168, 169; threaten the Scot-kingdom, 215, 216; their settlements in Northumbria in Æthelstan's day, 263 and *note* 2, 264; enmity of Eadmund to, 269; attack East-

Anglia, 369, 370; their victory at Maldon, 370; treaty made with them, 375; its policy, 377, *note;* plot to "betrap" them, *ib.* and *note;* sack Bamborough, *ib.;* extent of their trade, 448, 450; *see* Northmen, Wikings
Norwich, its position and importance, 397, 449; harried by Swein, 397; its dues to the king, *ib.*
Nottingham, Danes winter at, 94; attacked by Æthelred and Burhred, 95; one of the Five Boroughs, 122, 207; its situation and importance, 207-208, 439; fortified by Eadward, 208; his bridge and mounds there, 214, 439; duties of its burghers, 439; its merchant-gild, *ib.*; cnichten-gild, 440
Nottinghamshire, 236; joined with Lincoln and Leicester under Beorn, 498, 500; with Northumbria, 537, 565

O

Oath, its use in folk-moot, 24, 25; *see* Allegiance
Odda, ealdorman of Devon, 111
Odda or Odo, kinsman of Eadward the Confessor, 492; his earldom, 530, 536, 557; his death, 565
Odin's ring, 108
Odo, son of Robert the Strong, his defence of Paris, 243; becomes king of the West-Franks, *ib.*; his struggle with Hasting, 170
Odo, bishop of Ramsbury, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, his Danish origin, 223 and *note* 2, 327 and *note* 1; negotiates a peace between Eadmund and Olaf, 272; crowns Eadwig, 308; sends Oswald to Fleury, 344; denounces Eadwig's marriage, 311; withdraws from his court, *ib.* and *note* 2, 313; sentences Eadwig and Ælfgifu to separation, 313; consecrates Dunstan, 314 *note* 3; banishes Ælfgifu, 314, 315, *note* 1; returns to court, 315 and *note* 2; his death, *ib.*
Odo, bishop of Bayeux, half-brother of William the Conqueror, 503; regent of England, 574; Kent revolts against him, *ib.*
Odo, brother of Henry, king of France, 553
Odo, *see* Odda
Offa, king of Mercia, his efforts to secure the protection of pilgrims from Alpine robbers, 18; his laws, 21, *note* 1; gives Æthelwold Moll his daughter to wife, 40; his coinage, 228; his vill in London, 457 and *note*
"Ofer-hyrnesse," 140, *note* 2
Olaf, St., king of Norway, 466; driven out by Cnut, 468; his trading enterprises, 118; church of, in Chester, 442; London, 464, 465; York, 452, 560
Olaf the Fair, son of Ingialld, 90, *note* 1; attacks the Irish coast, 90; occupies Dublin, *ib.*; attacks the Scot kingdom, 91
Olaf or Anlaf, king of Dublin, his escape from Brunanburh, 254, *note* 2; raises the Danelaw against Eadmund, 270; storms Tamworth and Leicester, 272; becomes Eadmund's under-king, *ib.*; his death, 270, *note*
Olaf or Anlaf, Sihtric's son, takes refuge at the Scottish court, 252; marries the daughter of Constantine, 253; goes to Dublin, 242, 253; becomes the leader of the Ostmen, 253; raises the North against Æthelstan, 242, *note*, 253; his escape from Brunanburh, 254, *note* 2; succeeds the other Olaf as king of Dublin, 270, *note*; under-king of Northumbria beyond the Tees, 289; driven out by Eric, 290; returns, 291; account of him in the Saga, 293, *note* 1; rules in Dublin and becomes Eadgar's ally, 323 and *note* 2
Olaf Tryggvason, his childhood, 118, *note* 4; claims the throne of Norway, 378; his Wiking adventures, 379; joins Swein in an invasion of England, *ib.*; his conversion and baptism, *ib.*, *note* 1;

treaty with Æthelred and withdrawal, 381; saga of his death, 384-386
Olaf, king of Sweden, 384
Olaf, called "Tree-feller," 53, *note*
Olney, treaty of, 418
Onund the "Road-maker," 53, *note*
Ordgar, ealdorman of the Wealhcyn, 316; father-in-law of Æthelwold, *ib.*, *note* 2; of Eadgar, *ib.*, 320, *note* 1
Ordmær, ealdorman, 320, *note* 1
Orkneys, Wikings in, 66, 170, 215; Harald Fairhair sets up a Norse earldom in, 170 and *note* 3, 215; starting-point of attacks on the Scot kingdom, 215; jarls of, masters of Caithness, 107, 558; of the western isles, 558, 559; *see* Sigurd
Ormside, 276, 277
"Orosius," Ælfred's translation of, 161, *note* 4, 162, 164; first account of Denmark, 362, *note*
Osbeorn, son of Ulf, 487
Osbeorn, son of Siward, 559
Osbern, jarl, joins Guthrum, 98; slain at Ashdown, *ib.* and *note* 1
Osbern, his life of St. Dunstan, 281, *note;* his account of the revolt against Eadwig, 313 *note*
Osbern, chaplain to Eadward, 546
Osburga, mother of Ælfred, 180
Osgar, clerk of Glastonbury, sent to Fleury, 343, *note* 2, 344
Oslac, the "great earl" of Northumbria, 325; date of his elevation, *ib.*, 316, *note* 1; banished, 354
Osred, son of Alchred, king of Northumbria, 41; revolt against, *ib.*; takes refuge in Man, *ib.*; slain, *ib.*
Ostmen, the name, 75, 90, *note* 2; alliance with the Welsh, 66, 67, 80; their quarrels, 76 and *note* 2; attack the Scot kingdom, 91; their alliance with the Danes of Northumbria, 213, 242, 252, 253; stir up the Danelaw to revolt, 253, 270; invade Mid-Britain, 272; their alliance with the English kings, 323; with Godwine, 529; their trade with Chester, 440; with Bristol, 444
Oswald, nephew of Archbishop Odo, 344; his northern blood, 327 and *note* 1; at Fleury, 344; bishop of Worcester, *ib.*; his work on the Chronicle, 341; his share in the monastic revival, 344, 345; archbishop of York, 345; joins Dunstan in crowning Eadgar, 351; crowns Eadward, 353; his death, 341, *note*
Oswine, king of Cumbria, 252, *note* 4
Oswini, last king of Deira, 39, *note* 1
Oswulf, king of Northumbria, succeeds Eadberht, 40; slain, *ib.*
Oswulf, high reeve of Bernicia, 293; made earl of Northumbria, *ib.*
Oswulf, son of Eadwulf of Bernicia, revolts against Tostig, 562, *note;* his rivalry with Copsige, *ib.*; slain, *ib.*
Othere, earliest authority for the settlements of the Danes, 88, *note* 1; his account of the northman's land, 178, 179; his description of Denmark, 362
Otto, son of the German king Henry, marries Eadgyth, daughter of Eadward the Elder, 249; crowned at Aachen, 267; his war with Lewis From-over-sea, *ib.*; drives Lewis from Lorraine, 272; makes peace with him, *ib.*; revival of the Empire under him, 299, 513; his claim to supremacy, *ib.*; its limits, 513; sends ambassadors to Eadmund, 285 and *note* 1; receives envoys from Eadred, 299, *note* 1; his wars with Harald Blaatand, 323, 365; his alliance with Eadgar, 328, *note* 3; his death, *ib.*
Owen, under-king of the North Welsh, submits to Æthelstan, 220; present in his witenagemots, 224 and *note* 1; in those of Eadred, 298
Oxford, earliest evidence for its existence, 144, *note* 1; Ælfred's mint at, 144 and *note* 1, 438; foundation of St. Frideswide's, 437; border-town of the Mercian ealdormanry, 124, 438; annexed to Wessex by Eadward the Elder, 197; its extent, 438; its portmannimot, *ib.*; its parishes, *ib.*; its

traffic along Thames, 439; its dealings with Abingdon, *ib.*; burnt by Thurkill, 407; thegns slain at, 414; Eadgar's law renewed at, 425; witenagemots at, 414, 425, 480; Harald Harefoot dies at, 484
Oxfordshire, its origin, 237; its feorm, 404, *note* 2; taken from Mercia and joined with Hereford, &c., 500; with East-Anglia, 565

P

Pallig, brother-in-law of Swein, serves under Æthelred II., 383
Palnatoki, a noble of Fünen, Swein brought up in his house, 365; gives Harald Blaatand his death-wound, 366; seizes Jomsborg and founds a state there, 367
Papacy, rival claimants of, 515; its revival under Leo IX., *ib.*
Paris sacked by the Wikings, 76; its defence against Hrolf, 243; duchy of, its creation, *ib.*; policy of Charles the Simple towards, 244; dukes of, *see* Hugh, Odo, Robert
Parish, the, growth of, 13; its relation to the township, 14-16; priest of, his dues, 14; supersedes the tun-reeve, 15
Patrick, St., the younger, his tomb at Glastonbury, 283, *note* 1
Paul, St., church and monastery in London, 453; portmannimot and muster of the citizens in its churchyard, 459, *note* 3, 461
Pavia, birth-place of Lanfranc, 504
Peada, 39, *note* 1
Pen, battle of, 417
Peter, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 546, 547
Peterborough sacked by Danes, 96; Chronicle of, 341, *note* 2
Pevensey, Godwine and his sons at, 523; William lands at, 569
Picts, the, spoiled by Halfdene, 115; take Alclwyd, 275; rise of their kingdom, 184, 185; its extinction, *ib.*; name superseded by that of the Scots, *ib.*; kings of, *see* Kenneth
Pilgrimages, 16; their route, 17; their danger, 17, 18; their popularity, 18; efforts for their protection, *ib.*; enjoined as penances, 19; their evil consequences, *ib.*; pilgrimage of Æthelwulf, 81; of Ceadwalla, 16, 17; of Ine, 17; of Mercian and East-Saxon kings, *ib.*; of Cnut, 467; of Robert the Devil, 475; of Swein, 532
Plegmund, a Mercian, archbishop of Canterbury, 156
Poetry, English, *see* Songs
Poitou, 508
Ponthieu, its relation to Flanders and Normandy, 267; war between Arnulf of Flanders and William Longsword in, *ib.*; subject to William the Conqueror, 553; Harold wrecked at, 567; counts of, *see* Guy, Herlwin, Ingelram
Popes, *see* Alexander, John, Leo, Nicolas
Porlock, Harold at, 533
Portmannimot of Oxford, 438; of London, 461; the "husting," 465
Port-reeve of London, 461
"Primarius," 286 and *note* 3
Progresses, royal, 32; their effects in creating the great officers of the household, 33; on the system of justice, *ib.*; their extension under Eadgar, 350; under Cnut, 426
Pucklechurch, Eadmund slain at, 280

R

Races, mixture of, in Britain, 3; its results, 3, 4
Ragnald, king of Northumbria, 274, *note* 1; under-king of Deira, 289
Ralf of Mantes, nephew of Eadward the Confessor, 492; strife of his followers with the English, 527; joins Eadward against Godwine, 528; receives part of Swein's earldom, 530; his forces routed by Ælfgar and Gruffydd, 564; his death, 565
Ralf of Wacey, 489
Ralf of Toesny, 553

Ramsbury, bishops of, *see* Hermann, Odo
Ramsey, Cnut's gifts to, 433; Wythmann abbot of, 545
Randolf of Bayeux, 505
Rapes of Sussex, 231
Reading, Danes at, 98, 102, 103
Rechru, 66, *note* 3
Reeve, the king's, his duties, 238; *see* High-reeve, Wic-reeve, Shire-reeve, Port-reeve, Tun-reeve
Reginbold, chancellor, 546, 547
Repton, burial-place of the Mercian kings, 106; Danes winter at, *ib.*
Revenue, the royal, its distribution under Ælfred, 181, 182; its sources, 403, 404, *note* 2
Rheims, council of, 519; its political results, 520, 521
Richard the Fearless, son and successor of William Longsword, 273; reared in the Bessin, 388; his accession followed by a civil war, 273; his alliance with Harald Blaatand, 364; Normandy under him, 323, 389, 390; treaty with Æthelred, 376 and *note*
Richard the Good, son of Richard the Fearless, 391; his alliance with Æthelred, 391, 392; gives a refuge to Æthelred and his house, 411, 412
Richard III., son and successor of Richard the Good, 473; betrothed to Adela of France, 521
Richard, son of Scrob, 492
Richmondshire, 231
Ricsig, king of Northumbria, 115; his death, *ib*
Ridings, *see* Trithings
Ripon, Wilfrid's abbey at, destroyed by the Danes, 93; the church destroyed by Eadred, *ib.*, *note* 2, 292; Æthelstan's grants to, 222
Riponshire, 231
Roads, their dangers in the tenth century, 337; Roman, *see* Watling Street, Fosse, Icknield
Robert the Devil succeeds Richard III. as duke of Normandy, 474; subdues Brittany, *ib.*; restores King Henry of France, *ib.*; supports Baldwin of Flanders, *ib.*; prepares to invade England, *ib.*; his fleet wrecked, 475; names William as his successor, *ib.*; pilgrim to the Holy Land, *ib.*; his death, 476
Robert, abbot of Jamièges, chaplain of Eadward the Confessor, 492, 546, 547; his influence over the king, 501; made bishop of London, *ib.*, 547; archbishop of Canterbury, 525; his quarrel with Godwine, 525, 526; his visit to William, 531, *note*; his flight, 534, 537; outlawed, 537; protests against Stigand's intrusion, 538, 579; his deposition held invalid, *ib.*
Robert the Strong, duke of Paris, 243
Rochester attacked by the Wikings, 78, 148, 382; relieved by Ælfred, 149; mint at, 228; see of, its lands ravaged by order of Æthelred II., 357, 358; bishops of, *see* Siward
Roderic Mawr, king of North Wales, pays tribute to Mercia, 80; alliance of his house with the northmen, 183; its submission to Ælfred, *ib.*
Rodward, archbishop of York, 221 and *note* 2; his death, 222
Roeskilde, Harald Blaatand builds a church and castle at, 365; Cnut appoints an English bishop to, 433
Roger of Toesny, 421, 473
Rognwald, son of Harald Fair-hair, burnt by Eric Bloody-axe, 263
Rollo, *see* Hrolf
Rome, Ælfred's visit to, 99; Ælfred sends alms to, 105 and *note* 2; his intercourse with, 183; Saxon school at, 18, 468
Romney secured by William, 572
Ross, Wikings in, 66, 215
Rouen sacked by the Wikings, 76; attacked by Hrolf, 244; loyal to William, 506
Rudolf of Burgundy claims the West-Frankish Crown, 249; becomes king, 250; defeats the northmen of the Loire, *ib.*; receives the homage of William Longsword, 251; his death, 265
Runcorn fortified by Æthelflæd, 202

S

Saintes pillaged by the Wikings, 77
Salt-works in Dorset, 7 and *note;* Cheshire, *ib.*, *note;* Worcestershire, 335; Kent, 336 and *note* 1
Sandwich, raid of the Wikings on, 78; its early importance as a seaport, *ib.* and *note* 1; Æthelred's fleet assembles at, 403, 446, *note* 1; Swein lands at, 409; becomes the main port of the Channel, 446; its "butsecarls," *ib.* and *note* 1; its ferry-dues and port-tolls granted by Cnut to Christchurch, Canterbury, *ib.* and *note* 2; seized by Harald Harefoot, *ib.* and *note* 3; its possession disputed between Christchurch and St. Augustine's, *ib.*; its herring-fisheries, 447; Harthacnut lands at, 484; Eadward gathers a fleet at, 502, 522, 533
Saxony, duchy of, attacked by Harald Blaatand, 364
Scale How, 277
Scandinavia, its dependent position under Cnut, 424; supplies iron to Britain, 447; *see* Danes, Northmen, Norwegians, Swedes, Wikings
Scargate fortified by Æthelflæd, 198
Schools, *see* Abingdon, Ælfred, Bec, Glastonbury, Rome, Winchester, Worcester, York
Scots subject to the Picts, 185; their name supersedes that of Picts, *ib.*; join a league against Æthelstan, 220, 253; defeated at Brunanburh, 254, 255; their alliance with Eadred, 289; invade Northumbria, 435; defeated at Durham, 399, 470; kingdom of, attacked by the Ostmen, 91; by Thorstein and Sigurd, 107; its extent in the time of Ælfred, 184; its alliance with him, 186; its danger from the northmen, 215, 216; its relations with Eadgar, 324; its acquisition of Edinburgh, *ib.*, 470; of Lothian, 471; its altered relations to England, *ib.*, 472; its decline under Duncan, 558; Norman refugees from England in, 559; invaded by Siward, *ib.*; the Ætheling Eadgar takes refuge in, 574, 576; kings of, *see* Constantine, Duncan, Kenneth, Macbeth, Malcolm
Seal, its use under Eadward, 486, 493
"Secundarius," 86, *note* 2; office held by Ælfred, *ib.*, 101; by Godwine, 429; instituted by Cnut, 493 *note;* continued under the Confessor, *ib.*; its use, 544
Selsey, bishops of, *see* Æthelric, Heca
Selwood, the thegns of Wessex conspire at, 83; boundary of East and West-Wessex, 233
"Selwoodshire," the diocese of Ealdhelm, 231, *note*
Semland, 290, 363
Senlac, battle of, 570-572
Serf, *see* Villein
Seterington, Carl's sons slain at, 496
Seven Boroughs, two chief thegns of, slain by Eadric at Oxford, 414
Severn, river, fisheries in, 440 and *note;* lead-works in valley of, 336
Shaftesbury, abbey founded by Ælfred at, 133; mint at, 228; Eadward the Martyr buried at, 357
Sherborne, see of, 46; bishops of, *see* Ealdhelm, Ealhstan
Sherstone, battle of, 417
Sheppey ravaged by the Wikings, 64; they winter in, 79, 80; the Danes in Kent driven thither by Eadmund Ironside, 416, 417
Shetland, Wikings in, 66, 170; expelled by Harald Fair-hair, 170
Ship-money, 404, *note* 2
Ships of the Wikings, 59 and *notes*, 88, *note* 2
Shires, their West-Saxon origin, 141, *note* 6, 231; uses of the word, 231, 232; instances of shires in Cornwall, Kent, Sussex, Yorkshire, 231, 232; in York, 230, 231, 451, *note* 4, 461, *note* 2; later shires preserve the administrative forms of the "folk," 231; first named in the laws of Ine, 232, 233; use of the word by Asser and Ælfred, 233, *note* 2; early

formation in Wessex, 231-233; Hampshire and Wiltshire, 232; difference in names of earlier and later shires, 234; extended to the eastern dependencies of Wessex, *ib.*; established throughout Wessex by Æthelstan's time, *ib.* and *note* 2; their introduction into Mercia, 233-236; into the Danelaw, 236; their late introduction into East-Anglia and the north, 237, *note* 2; organization of the whole kingdom in, its date, *ib.*; difference of their organization in Wessex and in Mid-Britain, 238; sums due to the king from, 239; financial use of the system, 238

Shire-man, *see* Shire-reeve

Shire-moot the sheriff's court, 240

Shire-reeve, his office and duties, 233, 239; his importance in the shire-moot, *ib.*, 240, *note* 1; growth of his authority, 240; its executive character, *ib.*, *note* 2

Shoebury, Wikings encamp at, 172

Shrewsbury, castle at, 575

Shropshire, 237

Sidroc the Old and Sidroc the Young, jarls, join Guthrum, 98; slain at Ashdown, *ib.*, *note* 1

Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury, negotiates a treaty with the Norwegians, 375, *note* 1; position in the councils of Æthelred, 429

Sigurd, jarl of Orkneys, 107

Sigwald, jarl at Jomsborg, 368, 407; his vow at Harald Blaatand's funeral feast, 368

Sihtric, king of Dublin, driven out, becomes king at York, 242; marries a sister of Æthelstan, 219; his death, *ib.*

Silver How, 277

Silverside, 277

Siward becomes earl of Northumbria, 487, 495; of Nottingham, Northampton and Huntingdon, 537; his independent position, 492; his character, 495; his surname of "Digera," *ib.*; slays Eadwulf, *ib.*, 496, *note*; marries Ealdred's daughter, *ib.*; joins the king against Godwine, 527; his influence, 557, 558; Duncan's sons take refuge with him, 558; invades Scotland, 559; establishes Malcolm as its king, *ib.*; his death, 560; his burial-place, *ib.*, 452

Siward, bishop of Rochester, 579

Siward, descendant of Earl Uhtred, revolts against Tostig, 562, *note*

Skeggles Water, 277

Skiringsal, centre of northern trade, 118, *note* 3

Slaves, the English, answer to the Scandinavian thralls, 57; tolls on the sale of, 333; efforts of the Church in their behalf, 334; Æthelstan's reform, *ib.*; not bound to work on Sundays, *ib.*; allowed to purchase their freedom, *ib.* and *note* 3; forms of manumission and emancipation, 335; enactment of the Synod of Chelsea concerning, *ib.*

Slave-trade among the Danes, 118 and *note* 4; at Chester, 443; Bristol, 444; London, 456; vain attempts to abolish, 445

Sleswick, 63

Sokes, growth of, 30; the soke a privilege of the thegn, 136

Somerset, origin of its name, 234; victory of its fyrd at the Parret, 75; Eadmund Ironside raises troops in, 416; detached from Wessex and joined with Hereford, &c., under Swein, 500; ealdormen of, 233, *note* 2; *see* Æthelnoth

Somerton, 234

Songs, national, preserved among the gleemen, 338; by William of Malmesbury, 297, *note* 1; in the Chronicle, 254, *note* 1, 218, *note* 2, 341; Northumbrian songs preserved in West-Saxon versions, 298

Southampton gives its name to Hampshire, 231; mint at, 228; Swein and Olaf winter at, 380; Eadward the Confessor makes an unsuccessful descent at, 480; ealdormanry of, *see* Wessex (Central)

Southwark, Godwine encamps at, 528; burnt by William, 572

Spearhafoc, bishop of London, 525; his appointment quashed by the Pope, 526; withdraws, 537
Stafford fortified by Æthelflæd, 201; gives its name to a shire, 236
Staffordshire, its origin, 236
Staller or constable, his office, 542
Stamford, one of the Five Boroughs, 122, 206; its lawmen, *ib.*, 461, *note* 2; fortified by Eadward the Elder, 206
Stamford Bridge, battle of, 569
Stigand, priest of Assandun, 545, 578; chaplain to Cnut, 578; to Harald Harefoot, *ib.*, 545; first nomination to a bishopric, 578; bishop of Elmham, *ib.*; friend of Emma, *ib.*; supports Godwine, 529, 535; deposed and restored, 578, 579; bishop of Winchester, 579; archbishop of Canterbury, 538, 579; his uncanonical position, *ib.*; holds both sees, 579; his wealth, *ib.*; gets a pallium, 568, 579; consecrates two bishops, 579; feeling against him in Normandy, 538; at Rome, 579, 580; in England, 579-581; Wulfstan's repudiation of him, 580, 581; present at Eadward's death, 581
Strath-Clyde ravaged by Halfdene, 107 and *note* 1, 115; set free by the wreck of Northumbria, 184; joins the northern league against Eadward, 216; submits to him, 217, *note* 1; its border extended to the Derwent, 277; the name replaced by Cumbria, *ib.*, 184
Streoneshealh destroyed by Danes, 93; replaced by Whitby, *ib.*
Strut-Harald, jarl of Zeeland, 367, 407
Style, royal, of Eadward the Elder, 192; of Æthelstan, 240, 241, 269, *note* 2; of Eadmund, 269, *note* 2; of Eadred, 287, *note* 2, 288, *note* 2, 299; of Eadgar, 313, *note*, 314 and *note* 2
Suffolk, 237, *note* 2
Surrey forms part of the "Eastern Kingdom," 69; its fyrd defeated by the Wikings in Thanet, 79; attacked by the Danes, 104; ealdormen of, 233, *note* 2; becomes a shire, 234; supports Godwine, 532, *note* 2; joined with Essex, &c., under Leofwine, 565
Sussex forms part of the "Eastern Kingdom," 69; its rapes, 231; becomes a shire of the West-Saxon realm, 234; its coast harried by Child Wulfnoth the South-Saxon, 407; supports Godwine, 532, *note* 2; kings of, their extinction, 39, *note* 1
Sutherland, Wikings in, 66, 215
Sweden, its beginnings, 53 and *note* 1, 62; settlement of the Danes in, 89; kings of, *see* Eric, Olaf
Swein, son of Harald Blaatand, legends of his childhood, 365; heads resistance to Blaatand, *ib.*, 366 and *note* 2; his baptism, 365, *note* 2; exiled by his father, 366; succeeds him as king, *ib.*; restores heathenism, *ib.*; struggle with Jomsborgers, 367 and *note* 1; his marriage, *ib.*, *note* 1; his vow at Harald's burial-feast, 367, 368; driven from Denmark, 369; his Wiking life, *ib.*; joined by Olaf Tryggvason in an invasion of England, 379; lands at Southampton, 380; repulsed from London, *ib.* and *note* 1; treaty with Æthelred, 381; withdraws from England, *ib.*; recalled to Denmark, 384; wars with Olaf of Sweden, *ib.*; marries Olaf's mother, *ib.*; his victory over Olaf Tryggvason, 384, 386; again attacks England, 396; lands at Exeter, *ib.*; met by fyrds of Wiltshire and Hampshire, *ib.*; invades East-Anglia, 397; breaks truce with Ulfcytel and plunders Thetford, *ib.*; defeats the East-Anglians, 398; returns to Denmark, *ib.*; sends Thurkill to attack England, 407; lands at Sandwich, 409; enters the Humber, 409, 410; joined by the Danelaw, 410; marches into Wessex, 411; receives the submission of Winchester, *ib.*;

repulsed from London, *ib.*; receives the submission of West-Wessex, *ib.*; receives hostages from London, *ib.*; his death, 412
Swein, son of Cnut, 421; driven from Norway, 477; his death, *ib.*
Swein Estrithson claims the crown of Denmark, 487; of England, *ib.*; Eadward's alleged promise to, 489; his struggle with Magnus, 493, 502; sails to England, 574; bought off by William, 575
Swein, son of Godwine, 479; earl of Hereford, &c., 500; carries off the abbess of Leominster, 501; outlawed, *ib.*; his restoration opposed by Harold and Beorn, 523; murders Beorn, *ib.*; branded as "nithing" and outlawed, *ib.*; restored, 524; flies to Flanders, 529; his earldom divided, 530; his pilgrimage and death, 532
Swithiod, kingdom of, 62
Swithun, St., bishop of Winchester, 73; his fidelity to Æthelwulf, 83; his historical work, 165, 166 and *note* 2; church in London dedicated to, 462, *note*

T

Taddenescylf, 289
Taillefer at Senlac, 570, 571
Tamar, river, boundary of West Wales, 67, 221
Tamworth, residence of the Mercian kings, 45, 200, 235; fortified by Æthelflæd, 200; stormed by the Ostmen, 272
Taxation, national, under Æthelred II., 404, *note* 2; ship-levy and Danegeld, 405, *note* 2; of London under Cnut, 465
Tempsford, Danes encamp at, 205; taken by the English, *ib.*
Teowdor, under-king of the North-Welsh, 224, *note* 1
Thames, river, the Danes sail up, 98; its lower valley annexed to Wessex, 197; boundary between the realms of Eadwig and Eadgar, 314 and *note* 1
Thanet, victory of the Wikings in, 79; ravaged by Eadgar, 350
Thegns, origin of, 35; displace the Æthelings, *ib.*; their relation to the king, *ib.*; growth of the class, 135; its extension under Ælfred, 136; three classes of, 135, 136; their wealth and luxury, 336; their share in taxation, 403, *note* 2
Thelwell, Eadward the Elder at, 214
Theodred, bishop of the "Lundenwara," 459, *note* 3
Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, 334
Theow, *see* Slave
Thetford, Ivar and Hubba winter at, 96; plundered by the Danes, 397
"Thing" corresponds to "moot," 57; replaces it, 120; survival of the word at Thingwall, 117, *note* 2
Thored, Gunnar's son, 327, *note* 2; harries Westmoringa-land, *ib.*, 275, *note* 1
Thored, ealdorman, 372, *note*; leader of the fyrd with Ælfric, 377
Thorgils, leader of the Wikings, 66 and *note* 4; settles in Ulster, 74; destroys Armagh, *ib.*; slain, 76
Thorstein, son of Olaf the Fair, invades the Scot kingdom, 107
"Thrall," 57
Thunresfeld, witenagemot at, 225 and *note* 1, 234, *note* 2
Thurbrand, 496, *note*
Thurcytel, Jarl, holds Buckingham, 203; submits to Eadward the Elder, *ib.*, 211
Thurferth, Jarl, of Northampton, submits to Eadward the Elder, 204, 211
Thurkill, son of Strut-Harald of Zeeland, 407; sent to England by Swein, *ib.*; his ravages, *ib.*; defeats the East-Anglian fyrd, 407, 408; bought off by Æthelred, *ib.*; sacks Canterbury and seizes Archbishop Ælfheah, 409; enters Æthelred's service as a mercenary, *ib.*; defends London against

Swein, 411; rejoins the Danes, 413; makes peace between Harald and Cnut, *ib.*; ealdorman of East-Anglia, 420; banished, 424
"Thwaite" in place-names, 116, 276, *note* 2
Thyra, wife of Gorm the Old, 363
Tithes, their institution, 14 and *note* 1, 80, *note*
"Toft" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Tolls on the sale of slaves, 334; at Lewes, *ib.*; on herrings at Abing-don, 439; at Sandwich, 446, *note* 3
"Ton" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Torksey, Danes encamp at, 106; its trading importance, 439
Tostig, son of Godwine, marries Judith of Flanders, 522; flies with Godwine to Flanders, 529; Eadward's favour to, 555; visits Pope Nicolas, 567, *note* 1, 580; earl of Northumbria, 560; his character, 561; his stern justice, *ib.*, 562, *note*; becomes the sworn brother of Malcolm, 563; rising of Northumbria against him, 567; its leaders, 562, *note*; goes to Flanders, 567; goes to Norway and joins Harald Hardrada in an invasion of England, 569; engages "butsecarls" at Sandwich, 446, *note* 1; his overthrow at Stamford Bridge, 569
Tottenhale, Danes defeated at, 195
Toulouse, Wikings at, 76
Touraine conquered by the counts of Anjou, 508
Towcester fortified by Eadward the Elder, 204; attacked by Danes, *ib.*
Township, the, its relation to the parish, 14-16
Trade, Æthelstan's regulations concerning, 227; inland trade in the tenth century, 335-337, 436-440; developement of external trade, 440 *et seq*; impulse given by the Danes, 440; trade on the east coast, 447; of the northmen, 447, 448; of London, 463; of Flanders, 511, 512; between England and Flanders, 517
Trithings in Deira, 120; their divisions, *ib.*; in Lincolnshire, 122
Treasurer, *see* Hordere
Treasury, *see* Hoard
Truce of God, 489, 490
Tun-moot, the, its place of meeting, 15; survival in parish vestry, 16
Tun-reeve, the, superseded by the parish priest, 15
Tunsberg, its trade, 448, *note* 3
Tynemouth, burning of, 93

U

Ufegeat blinded, 398, *note* 2
Uhtred, son of Waltheof, made earl of Northumbria, 399; defeats the Scots, *ib.*, 470; his marriages, 399, 496, *note*; joins Swein, 410; joins Eadmund, 415; submits to Cnut, *ib.*, 496, *note*; his feud with Thurbrand, 496, *note*; murdered, *ib.*, 417, 420
Ulf, his marriage with Estrith, 426; ruler of Denmark, 424, 426; guardian of Harthacnut, 467
Ulf, Norman chaplain of Eadward, 492, 546, 547; bishop of Dorchester, 510, 546, 547; his flight, 534
Ulf, son of Dolfin, 562, *note*
Ulfcytel, ruler in East-Anglia, 393, 394, *note* 1, 397; his northern blood, 397; independence of East-Anglia under him, *ib.*; defeated by Swein, 398; by Thurkill, 408; joins Eadmund, 417; slain at Assandun, 417, 418
Ulster, Wikings in, 74
Ulverston, 277
"Unrædig," Æthelred the, 371

V

Val-ès-Dunes, battle of, 506
Varangians, the, English among, 574
Vermandois, counts of, 251
Vestry, parish, 16
Villeins, their tenure, 329, 330; degrees of their social rank, 331, *note* 1; free socially though not politically, 333; the free ceorls gradually degraded into, 360
"Vinheidi," 254, *note* 1

W

Walbrook, 456
Wales, North, *see* Welsh
Walter, a Lotharingian, 547; chaplain to Eadgyth, 548; bishop of Hereford, 547; consecrated at Rome, 580
Waltham, Harold's church at, 580
Waltheof, earl of Northumbria, 354
Waltheof, earl of Bernicia, 373, 399
Waltheof, son of Siward, 560; joins the revolt against Tostig, 562, *note*; legends of his exploits, *ib.*; avenges Ealdred's death, 496, *note*
Wantage, 99 and *note* 1
Wapentake, meaning and origin of the word, 120; its use in Lincolnshire, 122
Warbury, Æthelflæd at, 202
Wardour, story of Ælfred at, 175
Wareham, shire-town of Dorset, 445; Guthrum encamps near, 108; mint at, 228; Eadward the Martyr buried at, 356
Warwick, its origin, 202; fortified by Æthelflæd, *ib.*; gives its name to a shire, 236; its feorm, 404
Warwickshire, its origin, 235, 236
Waterford founded by Wikings, 74
Watling Street, 199; origin of name, 200 and *note* 1; seized by Æthelflæd, 198
Wealh-cyn, 2, 75
Wearmouth, burning of, 51
Wedmore, peace of, 112; its effect on Europe, 113; on the Danes, 153; on the English, *ib.*, 154
Weile, burial-mounds near, 363
Weland the Wiking, 85, *note* 3
Wells, bishops of, *see* Duduc
Welsh, North, their relation to Mercia, 44; revolt against it, 80; their alliance with the Danes, 172; become subject to Ælfred, 183; to Eadward the Elder, 208, *note* 2; to Æthelstan, 220; kings of, present in Æthelstan's witenagemots, 224 and *notes*; Eadgar's relations with, 323, 324; united under Meredydd, 377; at war with Mercia, 409; rising of, suppressed by Cnut, 469; Gruffydd ap Llewelyn's power, 493, 564; league of Gruffydd and Ælfgar, 564; revolt against the Normans, 574; kings of, *see* Cledauc, Eugenius, Gruffydd, Howel, Jeothwel, Judwal, Llewelyn, Meredydd, Morcant, Owen, Roderic, Teowdor, Wurgeat
Welsh, West, provisions concerning them in Ine's law, 21-22; rise against Ecgberht, 167; defeated at Hengestdun, *ib.*; revolt against Ælfred, 172; subdued by Æthelstan, 220-221
Wends, raids on Jutland, 89, *note*; kings of, *see* Burislaf
"Wendune" or "Weondune," 254, *note* 1
"Wer" assessed in coin in the laws of Æthelberht, 228
Werburgh, St., church of, at Chester, 195, 439
Werfrith, bishop of Worcester, his school, 156; literary work, *ib.*, 175; possible share in the Worcester Chronicle, 191, *note* 4
Werwulf, chaplain to Ælfred, 157
Wessex, earliest written law in, 20; its military strength, 45; its geographical advantages, 45-46; its varied composition, 46, 68, 69; its extension west of Selwood, 233; its administrative order, 47; its connexion with the "Eastern Kingdom," 69; its military organization, 69, 70; revolts against Æthelwulf, 83; closer union with Kent, 86, *note* 2; its isolation in face of the Danes, 97; surprized by them, 109; its exhaustion, 132; its revival under Ælfred, 133 *et seq.*; decline of monasticism in, 177 and *note*, 343; oath of allegiance to Eadward in, 211; change in its relations to northern Britain, 215; probable date of its shire organization, 233; extension of the shire-system to its eastern dependencies, 234; organization of its shires, 238; foreign alliances of its kings, 249; source of the second old English literature, 297; its three divisions, 316; its

new organization under Eadgar, *ib.*; ravaged by Thurkill, 408; by Cnut, 414; submits to Cnut, 415; made into an earldom, 427; adheres to Harthacnut, 479, 480; accepts Harald as king, 483, 484; kings of, *see* Ælfred, Æthelbald, Æthelberht, Æthelred, Æthelstan, Æthelwulf, Ceadwalla, Cenwalch, Eadgar, Eadmund, Eadward, Eadwig, Ecgberht, Harthacnut, Ine; earldom of, its extent and importance, 498; altered position of the king in, 498-499; Somerset and Berkshire detached from, 500; earls of, *see* Godwine, Harold

Wessex, the original or Central, 46, 231; later ealdormanry, 315, 316; submits to Swein, 411; ealdormen of, *see* Ælfheah, Ælfric, Æthelmær

Wessex, Western, mixture of blood in its population, 46; its strong West-Saxon character, 47; ealdormanry of, 315, 316; submits to Swein, 411; ealdormen of, *see* Æthelmær, Æthelweard

Westfold, kingdom of, 62; kings of, *see* Biorn, Godfrid, Harald

Westminster, Harald Harefoot buried at, 484; home of Eadward the Confessor, 499; William crowned at, 573

Westmoreland, 237, *note* 2

Westmoringa-land, the modern Westmoreland, 277, *note* 3; colonized by Norwegians, 274, 275; harried by Thored, 275, *note* 1; character of country and people, 275, 276; English fugitives in, 276

Whitby, Danish settlement, 93, 116

Whithern, English bishops of, 275 and *note* 3; *see* Badulf

Wic-reeve of London, 455, 461

Wiglaf, king of Mercia, deposed by Ecgberht, 48; restored, 49

Wight, extinction of its kings, 39, *note* 1; Wikings winter in, 382, 400; meeting of Godwine and Harold off, 533

Wigmore, Eadward the Elder at, 204

Wiheal, Uhtred slain at, 496, *note*

Wihtræd, king of Kent, his laws, 9, 21, *notes* 1 and 3

Wikings, the name, 57 and *note* 2; their two lines of attack, 62, 76; raids on South England, 75-80, 85, 86; on Gaul, 76, 77; greed for booty rather than dominion, 87; importance for them of Britain, 86; concentration of their forces on it, 107; *see* Danes, Norwegians, Ostmen

Wilbarstone, 325

William Longsword, son of Hrolf, his policy, 247; his war with Hugh the Great and the Bretons, 250, 251; conquers the Cotentin, 251; does homage to Rudolf of Burgundy, *ib.*; Æthelstan's negotiations with, 266; his war with Arnulf of Flanders, 267; excommunicated, *ib.*; leagues with Hugh and Arnulf against Lewis, 268; rejoins the Karolingian party, 272; alliance with Harald Blaatand, 364; revolt against, 388; murdered, 273

William, son of Robert the Devil, his birth, 475; appointed by Robert as his successor, *ib.*; anarchy of his early years, 476; his boyhood, 490; his temper, *ib.*; his counsellors, 503; revolt against him, 505; his escape, 506; seeks aid of the French king, *ib.*; Val-ès-Dunes, 506, 507; helps King Henry against Geoffrey of Anjou, 508, 509; his vengeance on Alençon, 509; wins Domfront, *ib.*; seeks the hand of Matilda of Flanders, 516; the marriage forbidden, 521; visits England, 531; alleged promises of the Crown to, 491, 531 and *note*; marries Matilda, 551; threatened with excommunication, *ib.*; his quarrel and reconciliation with Lanfranc, *ib.*; revolts against, 552; attacked by France and Anjou, *ib.*; his plan of defence, 552, 553; its success, 553; Harold's oath to, 567; his claim against Harold, 568; lands at Pevensey, 569; his exploits at Senlac,

571; his victory, 572; advance over southern England, *ib.*; London submits to, 573; his crowning, *ib.*; founds the Tower, *ib.*; his charter to London, *ib.*; his rule, *ib.*; returns to Normandy, 574; takes Exeter, *ib.*; subdues the north, *ib.*; occupies York, *ib.*; Eadwine and Morkere submit to, *ib.*; general rising against, 574, 575; his vow of vengeance on the north, 575; buys off the Danes, *ib.*; relieves Shrewsbury, *ib.*; ravages Northumbria, *ib.*; his march to Chester, 576; last revolt against, *ib.*; Ely surrendered to, 577; receives the fealty of Malcolm, *ib.*

William, a Norman priest, chaplain to Eadward the Confessor, 492, 546, 547; made bishop of London, 537, 546, 547

William of Arques, 552

William of Eu, 552

William Fitz-Osbern, friend of William the Conqueror, 503; left as regent in England, 574; relieves Exeter, 575

Wilsætan, bishops of, *see* Ramsbury; ealdormen of, 233, *note* 2

Wilton gives its name to Wiltshire, 232; victory of the Danes at, 105

Wiltshire, origin of its name, 232; "Wiltun-scire," 233, *note* 2; its relation to Hampshire, *ib.*; Swein marches into, 396; plundered by Thurkill, 408; war against Cnut in, 416

Winchester, centre of the older Wessex, 46; advantages of its position, *ib.*; raid of the Wikings on, 85; its abbey, 133; its mint, 228; Æthelwold's school at, 339; clerks supplanted by monks in its cathedral church, 344; the royal Hoard in, 403, *note* 2; submits to Swein, 411; dwelling-place of Emma after Cnut's death, 480, 481; Eadward the Confessor crowned at, 487; surrendered to William, 572; witenagemots at, 221, *note* 2, 224, *note* 1; bishops of, *see* Ælfheah, Æthelwold, Denewulf, Stigand, Swithun; Chronicle of, its origin, 164-166; its account of the reign of Eadward the Elder, 189 *note*, 191, *note* 4; its character during the reign of Æthelstan, 218, *note* 2; its last continuation possibly due to Bishop Æthelwold, 340

Wini buys see of London, 455, *note* 1

Winchanheale, 40

Wimborne, Æthelred I. buried at, 105

Wirral, northern settlers in, 276

Witenagemot, the, changes in its character, 36, 37 and *note* 1; not a representative of the nation, 37, 38 and *note* 1; a royal council named by the king, 38 and *note* 2; its composition under Æthelstan, 221 and *note* 2, 224 and *notes*; its rights, 224, 225; its work in restoring public order, 225; at Eadred's crowning, its national character, 287 and *note* 2; presence of northern jarls and Welsh princes in, under Eadred, 298; increasing importance of the ealdormen in, 305; its measures of defence against the Danes, 401, 405, 406, 408, 409; recalls Æthelred II., 412; assembled by Cnut to sanction his election as king, 425; chooses Harald for king, 480; tries and acquits Godwine, 482; chooses Harthacnut for king, 484; rejects Godwine's proposal to help Swein Estrithson, 502; Godwine outlawed by, 529; Godwine restored and the "Frenchmen" outlawed by, 535; Ælfgar outlawed by, 564; of Kent, petitions Æthelstan to enforce justice, 30; of Mercia and Wessex, divides the realm between Eadwig and Eadgar, 313, 314, *note* 1; of Wessex, banishes Emma, 483, 578; deposes Stigand, 578, 579; forsakes Harthacnut and chooses Harald as king, 484; witenagemot at Calne, 353; Colchester, 221, *note* 2, 224, *note* 2; Exeter, 225 and *note* 1, 227; Feversham, 225 and *note* 1; Frome, 224, *note* 1, 252, *note* 3;

Greatley, 225 and *note* 1; Kirtlington, 353; Lewton, 221, *note* 2, 224, *notes;* London, 425, 528, 534; Middleton, 221, *note* 2, 224, *note* 2; Oxford, 414, 425, 480; Thunresfeld, 225 and *note* 1, 234, *note* 2; Winchester, 221, *note* 2, 224, *note* 1; Worcester, 580; York, 221, *note* 2
Witham, Eadward the Elder at, 198
Witch drowned at London Bridge, 11, 459, *note* 1
Witchcraft, decrees against, 10, 11
Worcester, Bishop Werfrith's school at, 156; becomes the centre of English historical literature, 341; its importance, 440; resistance to Harthacnut's Danegeld at, 485; see of, annexed to that of York, 348; bishops of, *see* Aldulf, Dunstan, Ealdred, Werfrith; first or lost Chronicle of, its origin and composition, 191, *note* 4, 341 and *note;* preserved in the Peterborough Chronicle, 341 *note* 1, 370, *note* 2; its influence on the later historians, 342; its importance, *ib.* and *note;* its character in reign of Æthelred II., 370, *note* 2; extant Chronicle of, its date, 341, *note* 2; witenagemot at, 580
Worcestershire, 235; salt-works in, 335; severed from Mercia, 498; joined with Gloucester under Odda, 536
"Worth" in place-names, 276, *note* 2
Wreckage in Thanet punished by Eadgar, 350; rights of, at Sandwich, 446, *note* 2
Writ, the king's, 544
Writing, introduction of, 19, 20
Wulfeah blinded, 398, *note* 2
Wulfgar, ealdorman, counsellor of the Crown under Eadmund, 287
Wulfgeat made high reeve, 398; deprived, *ib.* and *note* 2
Wulfheard, ealdorman of Hamtonshire, defeats the Wikings, 5
Wulfhere, king of Mercia, sells the see of London to Wini, 455
Wulfhere, an English ealdorman, deserts to the Danes, 147, *note* 1
Wulfnoth, Child, the South-Saxon 407 and *note* 1
Wulfstan, St., prior of Worcester, 580; made bishop of Worcester, *ib.*; consecrated by Ealdred, *ib.*; his repudiation of Stigand, 580-581
Wulfstan, archbishop of York, 222; present in Æthelstan's witenagemots, 221, *note* 2, 252, *note* 3, 271; his influence in the north, 271; his policy, *ib.*; mediates between Eadmund and the Danes, *ib.*; joins the Danish party under Olaf, 272; accompanies Olaf and his host into Mid-Britain, *ib.*; helps to negotiate a peace between Eadmund and Olaf, *ib.*; returns to court, 279; swears allegiance to Eadred, 289; breaks his oath, *ib.*; present at Eadred's court, *ib.*, *note* 3, 293, *note* 1; arrested, 293; released, *ib.*, *note* 2
Wulfstan, his voyage up the Baltic, 179; Ælfred's comment on it, *ib.*, 61, *note;* his account of Denmark, 362, *note*
Wulfwig, chancellor to Eadward the Confessor, 546; made bishop of Dorchester, *ib.*; his consecration, 579
Wurgeat, under-king of the North-Welsh, 224, *note* 1
Wye, river, boundary between Welsh and English, 220, 221; fisheries in, 440 *note*
Wythmann, German chaplain of Cnut, made abbot of Ramsey, 545

Y

York, Alcuin born at, 42; its school, *ib.* and *note* 2; seized by the Danes, 92; its defences, *ib.* and *note* 2; victory of the Danes at, *ib.* and *note* 3; the minster rebuilt, 42; disappearance of its library and school at the Danish conquest, 93; Danes winter at, 95; traces of Danish settlement in its local names, 119; capital of Danish Northumbria, 120, 122; submits to Æthelflæd, 207 and

note 2; witenagemot at, 221, *note* 2; Æthelstan receives the West-Frankish envoys at, 265; submits to Cnut, 415; its trade, 119, 450, 452 and *note;* Roman remains at, in Dunstan's time, 450; its castle-mound and Danish fortress, *ib.*; its population, *ib.* and *note* 4; its extent, 451; its suburbs, 452; its fishermen, *ib.*; its Danish quarter, *ib.*; its churches, *ib.*; Siward dies at, 560; occupied by William, 574; stormed, and its garrison slaughtered, 575; "shires" in, 230, 231, 451, *note* 4, 461, *note* 2; see of, its importance after the Danish conquest of Northumbria, 95; Worcester annexed to it, 348; *see* Archbishops

Yorkshire, traces of Danish settlement in its local names, 116, 117 and *notes;* trade of the Danish settlers in, 118, 119; its ridings and wapentakes, 120; traces of the ancient divisions of Deira in, 231; late introduction of the name, 237, *note* 2; *see* Deira

Yser, river, Godwine's fleet in, 532

Z

Zeeland, settlement of the Danes in, 88; jarls of, *see* Strut-Harald, Thurkill

THE END.

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